

Nikolai  
Mostovets

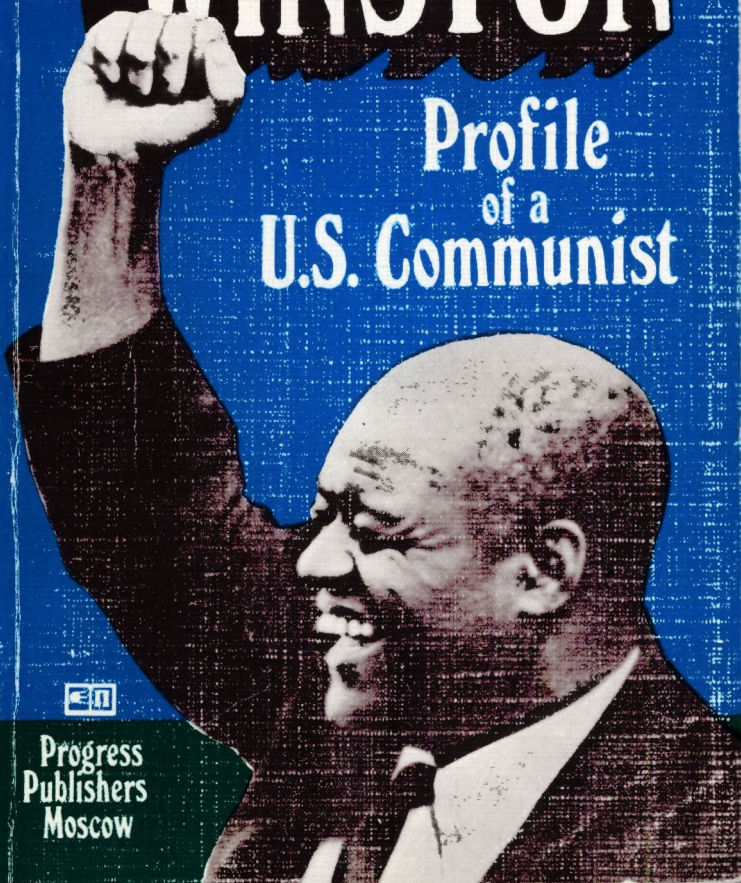
Henry

# WINSTON

Profile  
of a  
U.S. Communist



Progress  
Publishers  
Moscow



**Nikolai  
Mostovets**

**Henry  
WINSTON**

**Profile  
of a  
U.S.  
Communist**



**PROGRESS PUBLISHERS  
MOSCOW**

Translated from the Russian by *Dmitri Belyavsky*  
Designed by *Vladimir Bisengaliyev*

Н. В. Мостовец  
ГЕНРИ УИНСТОН  
*На английском языке*

© Издательство «Прогресс», 1983  
English translation © Progress Publishers 1983

М  $\frac{0905000000-426}{014(01)-83}$  55—83

## Contents

Introduction by Gus Hall, General Secretary, C.P. U.S.A.....	5
Foreword by the Author.....	9
Choosing His Path.....	11
Underground and in Prison.....	37
Back in the Ranks.....	70
National Chairman of the Communist Party .....	85
Party Card Number One.....	113
The Class Struggle Intensifies.....	117
Winston on the Strategy of Black Struggle Against U.S. Racism.....	123
Turning 70 .....	129

**INTRODUCTION BY GUS HALL,  
GENERAL SECRETARY, C.P. U.S.A.**

Like the quality of good metals, the quality of revolutionary leaders is measured by how they stand up under the stress of pressures and the heat from the battles of opposing class forces.

The quality of a revolutionary leader is not assessed by what he or she does at one or another specific moment. Because the class struggle is continuous, the assessment is whether he or she has pulling power over the long haul, whether there is continuity, especially when the political and ideological pressures are on.

A revolutionary leader is not measured by the sound of abstract rhetoric, but, rather, by how well he or she understands and explains the dynamics and the roots of reality, by how he or she projects a clear, victorious path ahead. Preachments and pronouncements without solid organization or forms of struggle do not change anything. The working class will not place its confidence in someone who is what Lenin called a phrasemonger.

It is a good beginning, but a revolutionary leader cannot be judged even on whether he or she expresses the truth in the abstract. The judgment is whether the truth is expressed in a way that moves people into struggles.

A revolutionary leader is not measured by theo-

retical pronouncements alone. The yardstick is whether theoretical assessments lead to and result in struggles, in movements of the people.

It is because Comrade Henry Winston measures up in an exceptional manner to these standards that he is the National Chairman of our Communist Party.

Comrade Winston's revolutionary character has been molded by a lifetime struggle against racism. He has been molded by the sharp class struggles. His Marxist-Leninist understanding has been inspired by the October Revolution and the building of real socialism in the Soviet Union.

The life of Comrade Henry Winston is a proud page in the history of our Party. It is an illuminating page in the history of our working class, in the history of Black Americans fighting against racial and national oppression. It is a page of leadership, of courage, of dedication. It is commitment to the full measure.

Comrade Henry Winston is honored as a revolutionary, as a Marxist-Leninist leader of theory and practice because of his steadfastness on questions of principle, and a common sense attitude to tactical application.

Like in good metals, these qualities show up during moments of stress and pressures.

When some have had questions about whether the U.S. working class will fulfill its historic, advanced revolutionary role, Comrade Winston has always taken a firm, positive class position. It is within these positions of principle he has then helped to examine the weaknesses and the problems in the ranks of the workers.

Whenever some on the "left" have shown op-

portunistic weaknesses under the pressures of the class enemy, and began to lean toward anti-Soviet concepts, Comrade Winston has always taken a forthright stand against all forms of anti-Sovietism. He has always clearly seen this as an ideological instrument of the class enemy, as a specific form of anti-communism.

When, under the pressures of struggle, some in the Black liberation movement have taken positions that lead to national separation and divisions, Comrade Winston has taken a principled position of fighting for class unity, for Black-white unity as the only path to victory.

But he has done so within the context of clearly seeing the centrality of fighting against all manifestations of racism in the ranks of the white workers and white Americans generally. He does so within the context of understanding the nature and the role of national pride as an expression of an oppressed national and racial community.

Comrade Henry Winston has fought for a correct Leninist understanding of the inter-relationship between the class struggle and the struggle against national and racial oppression.

Comrade Winston's emphasis on the struggle against racism is a struggle for Black-white unity, for class unity.

When some, under the pressures of the enemy, have developed concepts that would have liquidated the Communist Party as a revolutionary vanguard organization, at all such moments Comrade Winston has stood firmly.

He has always fought well for the building of the Communist Party as a necessary instrument in the struggles of today and in the struggle for socialism.

Like a Marxist-Leninist steel cable, Comrade Winston is a firm revolutionary mooring in our Party and to our class. Like the steel cable, he is firm on questions of principle, but tactically and with flexibility he reflects the specific currents and pressures of the moment.

It is because of these qualities of Comrade Henry Winston that his 70th birthday has turned into a unique human and political event.

His contributions extend to every struggle of the working class and people in the United States. He gives strength to the bonds of international working class solidarity for the unity of the world Communist movement on the basis of the principles of Marxism-Leninism. He is loved by millions in all lands.

Comrade Winston is noted for his uncompromising insistence on the highest Communist standards of work and conduct, on the constant application of criticism and self-criticism, on unyielding struggle against the influences of enemy ideology.

Comrade Winston is no less noted for his unshakable confidence in the future. Of him, the noted civil liberties attorney John Abt said:

"The spirit that animates Henry Winston infuses the courageous and beautiful people who are fighting imperialism, and especially U.S. imperialism, everywhere. It is the spirit of people who know deep down within themselves which side they are on, and who know, too, that their side—our side—is invincible."



## FOREWORD BY THE AUTHOR

New York City. Manhattan, 23rd Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues. There are no skyscrapers here, like on Park Avenue, Avenue of the Americas or Fifth Avenue, nothing like the Empire State Building or the World Trade Center. Here there are six- and seven-story buildings with small shops, offices and factories. An eight-story building with an attractive entrance catches the eye on this comparatively quiet block. The building is the headquarters of the U.S. Communist Party, bought in 1976 with the money raised among the Party's many friends.

The building used to house a juvenile court. It needed a thorough renovation job. Volunteers came to do it—carpenters, metalworkers, electricians, painters, Communists and non-party union members. Three months of work transformed the building completely.

The first floor is now the Unity Book Center, always full of people. Upstairs there are the editorial offices of the *Daily World* and the *Political Affairs* magazine and the headquarters of the Young Workers' Liberation League.

The hallway on the eighth floor. Tables, chairs for visitors, display cases with gifts to the Communist Party. On the left, the door to the office of Comrade Henry Winston, National Chairman of the Communist Party, U.S.A.

The name of Henry Winston evokes the image of a champion of the working people's rights, of liberation for the oppressed. The life of this courageous man, a true revolutionary—Winnie to his friends—has always been a fight against injustice and for people's happiness. His name is well-known outside the United States too. Why is this man so popular and respected?

That is what this book is about.

## CHOOSING HIS PATH

On April 2, 1911 a boy was born into the family of Joseph Winston, a worker, in the small town of Hattiesburg, Mississippi. The boy, named Henry, was the second child in the family, the day he was born his sister, Dora, turned one year old. The family grew quickly: soon Henry had three more sisters and a brother. Joseph Winston worked at a sawmill. An unskilled worker, he had a hard time raising six kids. His wages, like those of any Black American, were just enough to support the family. Industry did not expand in Hattiesburg, while the labor force was growing each year. So Henry learned early what it meant to go hungry.

Racism was another thing he learned quite early in life. His family lived in a state where slavery had once flourished, like in neighboring Georgia and Alabama. His father and mother often told him about the times when the murder of a Black used to be a common and unpunished occurrence. In the evenings, Henry recalls, the kids would crowd around the blazing fireplace and listen to stories about horrors of the past. But was it really past? Racism still reigned there, in the South. Discrimination of Blacks was institutionalized.

At six, Henry went to an all-Black school, a dilapidated two-room building with broken windows. Three classes were taught in this school.

The school was a symbol of racial discrimination. It was located in a predominantly Black district, but separated from young Henry's home by railroad tracks and a white neighbourhood, which had to be crossed each day to get to the Black school. On the way, the Black children were met by the children of those who thought they were masters of the town, and these were white children. A hail of rocks welcomed Black boys and girls. One could hardly retaliate in kind: adult passers-by, policemen or, still worse, Ku Klux Klansmen might interfere.

Hattiesburg's Blacks often saw the burning crosses which Klansmen set up before another lynching.

At eight or nine Henry was already helping his family. After school he was a caddy at the golf course owned by rich whites who tossed small change at him. He was glad he could do something for his family.

Meanwhile, life in Hattiesburg was getting harder and harder. Steel industry was developing and clamoring for manpower in the other, more Northern states. So Henry's father decided to try his luck and move. In 1922 he came to Kansas City, Missouri, and got a job at a newly opened steel mill. True, wages were low, much lower for Blacks than for whites, but still it was a job, and wages were higher than in Hattiesburg. However, they were not enough to bring the entire family to Kansas City to join him.

In 1925, with financial help from other relatives, the family moved to Kansas City. Life, it turned out, was not easy there either. Now

there were eight of them, with the youngest child barely 12 months old. The father's wages were still not enough. The whole family occupied a single small room at first, until they were able to rent larger quarters.

After primary school Henry entered junior high school. Again, it was an all-Black school. Very soon he rose to the top of the class. He was especially well known for his progress in athletics. Neither before nor after him did the school have a better right halfback or long-distance runner. Sports, Henry recalled later, steeled him for the hardships that lay ahead.

In 1929, an economic crisis swept the country. Factories were shut down one after another, and unemployment grew at an unheard-of rate. Like many Black workers, Henry's father was among the first to be dismissed. A new ordeal began. Henry, the eldest son, had to help his family. He washed dishes in a restaurant for 12 hours a day, from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. At 7 a.m., without a break, he went to school. Still, soon he had to drop out as it was impossible to work 12 long hours and still attend school.

The young man tried many trades: painter, dishwasher, porter, shoeshine boy, newspaper boy. As a Baptist, he taught at a Sunday school for Black children. Like the great Russian author Maxim Gorky, Henry called that period his universities. Like Gorky, Henry knew what beatings and insults meant. Persecution of Blacks was commonplace. Lynch law was rampant. Henry himself many times saw howling racist mobs in white hoods burn crosses before raiding a Black district.

With so many problems facing him, the young man wondered who could put an end to such in-

justice and how. He read a lot. He studied books by Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. Du Bois, Upton Sinclair and Theodore Dreiser. But these books merely echoed what he himself saw and knew. They did not answer the question of what should be done to change the existing state of affairs.

In those days the Communist Party, established on September 1, 1919, was already active in the United States. Henry met many of its members. Once, quite accidentally, he happened to attend an open-air rally. It was sponsored by the Kansas City Party organization, and Abner Berry, one of its leaders, was among the speakers. Much of what he said seemed new and strange, but highly interesting. Henry kept interrupting the speaker with his questions, and that attracted the attention of the Party organization's leaders. After that, he was often invited to attend meetings; he himself tried to come to the Party center at every possible occasion.

From talks with his new friends, Henry began to see the role the Communist Party was playing in the nation's politics, in the struggle of the working people, especially Blacks, for their rights. His comrades told him about Russia where a revolution had triumphed, ending oppression and racial inequality, where all people were equal no matter what the color of their skin. One of Henry's new friends gave him John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook the World*. Henry could not put it down. The graphic account of the October Revolution impressed him tremendously. He said it supplied answers to the questions that had been plaguing him—how to change the world to win justice for all working people.

In the 1920s many works by Lenin were already

available in English in the United States. Young Winston read Lenin's speech delivered at an International Meeting in Berne on February 8, 1916, which explained the responsibility the capitalists everywhere, including the United States, bore for World War I. "Its capitalists are now making enormous profits out of the European war," Lenin said. "And they are also campaigning for war. They are saying that America, too, must prepare to enter the war, and that hundreds of millions of the people's dollars must be siphoned off into new armaments, into armaments without end."<sup>1</sup>

The young man was struck by the words of Eugene Debs quoted by Lenin. "I am not a capitalist soldier," Debs had said, "I am a proletarian revolutionist. I do not belong to the regular army of the plutocracy, but to the irregular army of the people. I refuse to obey any command to fight from the ruling class."<sup>2</sup> Lenin described Debs as "the American Bebel".

Soon after, he read another work by Lenin—his "Letter to American Workers". Every Communist in the U.S.A. had read it. American workers were eager to know about developments in far-off Russia; Lenin, for his part, regarded the labour movement in the United States with keen interest. Henry often reread that letter and was especially struck by these words: "The American people have a revolutionary tradition

---

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at an International Meeting in Berne, February 8, 1916", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

which has been adopted by the best representatives of the American proletariat, who have repeatedly expressed their complete solidarity with us Bolsheviks. That tradition is the war of liberation against the British in the eighteenth century and the Civil War in the nineteenth century." Lenin again referred to Debs: "I also recall the words of one of the most beloved leaders of the American proletariat, Eugene Debs, who wrote ... that he, Debs, would rather be shot than vote credits for the present criminal and reactionary war; that he, Debs, know of only one and, from the proletarian standpoint, legitimate war, namely: the war against the capitalists, the war to liberate mankind from wage-slavery. I am not surprised," Lenin added, "that Wilson, the head of the American multimillionaires and servant of the capitalist sharks, has thrown Debs into prison."<sup>1</sup>

Henry Winston called the "Letter to American Workers" a program. He returned to it again and again. During the 1949 Foley Square trial of Communist Party leaders he would often quote Lenin's words about Debs almost verbatim.

And then he read the *Communist Manifesto*. Now he knew what he should do: struggle, even if the imperialists threw him into prison, like Debs. That was the path he chose.

From the summer of 1930, when the worsening economic crisis had given rise to mass unemployment, movement of the unemployed on an unprecedented scale developed in the United States. The Communist Party did much to organ-

---

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Letter to American Workers", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, 1965, pp. 68, 69.



ize the movement: it drew up and widely disseminated a Program for Work Among Unemployed which comprised such demands as introducing a system of full-pay Federal unemployment insurance, putting the workers in charge of organizing the entire social security system, establishing a network of employment agencies headed by workers' representatives, and Federal, state and municipal aid to the unemployed.

In order to organize the unemployed masses to fight for those demands, Unemployed Councils were set up in large cities at the initiative of the Communist Party. One such council operated in Kansas City, and Henry Winston, at that time barely 19, was among its leaders. Mass demonstrations and rallies were staged in Kansas City as well as in New York, Chicago, Detroit, San Francisco, Cleveland and many other cities. One could often see a handsome Black athlete lead a column of demonstrators or speak from a platform. The audience responded enthusiastically to his fiery speeches, and his winning smile—"worth a million", as Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, a veteran U.S. Communist, put it, became a favorite with America's working people. In those days, when he was still very young, Henry Winston already displayed his brilliant talent of a speaker and organizer.

The struggle of the unemployed brought Winston close to Young Communist League members. He joined the organization in October 1931 and immediately became one of its leaders.

William Z. Foster, Chairman of the U.S. Communist Party, highly regarded the League's activities. Later, he wrote that "the League was building a strong Marxist-Leninist youth

leadership". Foster mentioned Henry Winston as one of such leaders.<sup>1</sup>

In December 1931 the Communist Party launched the first national hunger march on Washington. William Z. Foster, Elizabeth Flynn, Gus Hall, John Williamson and other party leaders were among its organizers. Columns of the unemployed from all large industrial centers converged on Washington. Henry Winston marched with the Kansas City youth column.

On the square in front of the Capitol, a band of unemployed musicians who also took part in the march played the *Internationale*. A mass rally was held, and then its participants went to the White House, hoping to hand the President their demands on immediate measures against unemployment. But President Hoover refused to receive the delegation or consider the demands.

A year passed. The economic crisis was worsening further. Unemployment reached an all-time high, 17 million people. The Communist Party organized the second national hunger march on Washington, on a much larger scale than in 1931. Now, Henry Winston was at the head of the Kansas City youth column.

This time the marchers were met with harsh reprisals. Army troops under General Douglas MacArthur were sent to disperse the unemployed who gathered in front of the White House. Several demonstrators were killed and many were wounded. But the government was forced to retreat: unemployment benefits and certain social

---

<sup>1</sup> William Z. Foster, *History of the Communist Party of the United States*, International Publishers, New York, 1952, p. 312.

security advantages were introduced. The marches revealed Henry Winston's gifts as an organizer and did much to educate him politically.

The strike movement and the struggle of the Black population for its rights were gaining strength in those years. Trying to check the upsurge in the class struggle, the ruling quarters in the United States attempted to incite whites against Blacks and split the working-class movement in order to weaken it. Frame-ups of Blacks were common.

The case of the Scottsboro Boys was typical. In 1931, nine Black youths aged 13 to 20 were arrested in Alabama on trumped-up charges of having raped white women. Although there was no evidence to prove them guilty, the accused were sentenced to die on the electric chair by an all-white jury in Scottsboro.

The verdict touched off a storm of indignation not only in the United States but abroad too. The Communist Party launched a powerful drive to save the lives of the nine Scottsboro victims. Henry Winston was among the organizers of that campaign in Missouri. The struggle for the lives of the innocent Scottsboro Boys highlighted Henry Winston's role as a prominent activist in the Black liberation movement and won him popularity among Blacks in the United States. He spoke at rallies and led demonstrations.

Joseph R. Brodsky, a courageous New York attorney, was selected by the International Labor Defense to handle the legal defense. Joseph North, white Communist journalist, and William L. Patterson, Black Communist attorney and mass leader, headed the national campaign to develop mass struggle and consciousness

against the Scottsboro frameup on political grounds. It was treated in the capitalist press simply as a criminal case. In this struggle, Patterson, North and many other Communists played outstanding roles.

In November 1932 the Supreme Court reversed the verdict of the district court. The masses owed this first important victory to the organizing effort by the Communist Party and all other Left forces. Henry Winston's contribution to it was considerable. The slogan "Black and white, unite and fight" grew out of the Scottsboro struggle.

About this time, Henry first met Benjamin Davis, Jr., a young Black lawyer from Atlanta, later to become a prominent leader of the Communist Party. Davis was active in Georgia in defense of the Scottsboro Nine; he also courageously defended young Angelo Herndon, a Black youth charged with "sedition" in the State of Georgia because he was organizing among the unemployed. In racist and Klan-ridden Georgia, young Black attorney Benjamin Davis, Jr. stood firm and brilliantly defended Herndon. His erudition and passionate dedication to the cause impressed Henry tremendously. The friendship they struck lasted until Davis' death.

Winston remembers yet another episode of those years—the campaign he organized to defend Barney Lee Ross, a young Black from Texas, falsely accused of raping a white woman and sentenced to death, a favorite trick used against Black protestors.

Winston started the campaign to defend Ross in Kansas City. Soon the wave of protest swept all the Southern states, including Texas. Under its

pressure, the governor of Texas delayed the execution of the innocent Black youth. However, he refused to rescind the verdict, saying: "The boy may be innocent but sometimes it's better to burn a house to save a village". Ross was sent to the electric chair.

The thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. Henry was steeled in the struggle against the racial oppression of his people.

Henry Winston's role in the marches of the unemployed, in the campaigns to save the lives of the Scottsboro Boys and Barney Lee Ross showed that he had evolved into a skilled party organizer and mass leader.

New York City, 1933. Winston had come there a year earlier to study at the national school of the Young Communist League.

Here, at local Party meetings Henry heard an orderly exposition of the tasks and program of the Party. To better grasp the program, he decided to attend a night training course run by the Party in his district. One night a Communist friend took him there. There were white and Black, young and old students there, but not very many of them. An animated discussion was in progress concerning current events: strikes continued, and so did demonstrations of the unemployed, and the Scottsboro case was still fresh in their memory.

Many of the young students had participated in the hunger marches and other organizing activities of that time. One of these was the 1932 campaign to put the Communist Presidential candidates, William Z. Foster and James W. Ford (a leading Black Communist), on the Kansas ballot. The youth, Black and white,

helped collect the signatures. Often this meant stopping at white homes, and the fact that many white working people signed the Communist petitions added to young Winston's political education. The teams of collectors were often white and Black youth working together. In fighting against evictions of workers who couldn't pay the rent, Black and white also worked together, and friendships grew between them.

One of the young women students at this time was Fern Pierce, who had worked with Henry Winston in many of the Party campaigns. Out of this common struggle, and now study, a love was born between them.

As they walked together from the classes, Fern told him more about herself. She came from a large family; her parents were farmers. At the moment she was unemployed. Her brother was a Party organizer in Texas. Earlier she had been a member of the Young Communist League and now, of the Communist Party. Party work took up a lot of her time.

Henry attended the school regularly and after classes he always walked Fern home. Soon they were married. In 1934, a son was born to them.

It was while he attended the night school, where he systematically studied Lenin's works, that Henry Winston finally decided to join the Communist Party. He became a member in 1933.

Three years later, he was elected to the National Committee and the Executive Committee of the Young Communist League. Later, he recalled: "Lenin's teachings showed the way. It was these ideas which influenced and molded my life and led me to understand questions of the

leadership of the working class. I also learned that victory for the class, and my people, could come about only if there was a Communist Party guided by Marxist-Leninist theory."<sup>1</sup>

In the 1930s, bourgeois-nationalist separatism was widespread among young Blacks. The Communist Party and the Y.C.L. conducted political education among the Black population, especially the youth. That was hard work: the outrages committed by Klansmen and other racists built up the hatred of whites among Blacks. Unity between Blacks and whites in their common struggle against the reactionaries, against the monopolies encroaching on their rights was among the foremost tasks of the Communist Party of the United States from the very start.

In the fall of 1933 Communist Party leaders decided to send him to the Soviet Union so that he could learn about life there and, above all, about the Soviet experience in solving the nationalities question. Henry had dreamed about visiting the Soviet Union ever since he read John Reed's book. But he could hardly expect himself, a new Party member, to see his dream come true so soon. Aside from that, there were then no diplomatic relations between the United States and the Soviet Union.

What happened was that under President Franklin D. Roosevelt diplomatic relations were established between the USSR and the United States on November 16, 1933. The policy of isolating the Soviet Union, pursued by the reactionary quarters in the United States, had collapsed. Now Americans could see for themselves how

---

<sup>1</sup> *World Magazine*, April 25, 1970, p. 3.

the country had changed over the 15 years since the October Revolution. Henry Winston was above all interested in the nationalities problem, in the status of the national minorities oppressed in czarist Russia.

While preparing to leave for the Soviet Union, Henry tried to stay with Fern as much as possible: he had always been busy—going away on trips, meeting people, studying. Now they spent long hours together discussing what he should see in Moscow, how he should organize his stay so that not a single minute would be wasted. Of Henry's relatives, Fern was the only one who knew about the trip. Recalling those days, she said that Henry prepared for it very thoroughly, realising that he would meet many people in Moscow and discuss all kinds of questions. He refreshed in his memory the books he had read recently: Marx's *Capital* and *Critique of the Gotha Program*, Lenin's *What Is To Be Done*, and *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. He knew the *Communist Manifesto* almost by heart.

Henry arrived in Moscow on November 25, 1933. The city fascinated him. Lux Hotel where he stayed together with many other foreign Communists was on Tverskaya Street, the main street of the Soviet capital. Henry checked in and hurried outside to see the city. The view of Red Square from Tverskaya Street was blocked by a huge building. Henry went around it and saw the Kremlin. Before his trip he had tried to visualize its age-old walls and towers, but he had never thought it would be that impressive. He entered the square and saw the Lenin Mausoleum. That day it was closed to visitors.



There was a crowd watching the changing of the guard. Henry paused at the Mausoleum's entrance, then walked to the Kremlin wall and found the graves of his fellow Americans, founders of the Communist Party of the United States—William Haywood, Charles Ruthenberg and John Reed. He had never met any of them but he knew a great deal about them.

He returned to the hotel late and had trouble falling asleep. He could still hardly believe he was really in Moscow. Again he recalled his unexpected departure, Fern, his friends at home.

Winston visited many cities of the new Russia and saw the new factories and plants Soviet people had built. He went to Central Asia, and the progress the republics there had made amazed him. He compared the position of Blacks, Mexicans and other oppressed Americans with the prosperity of national minorities in the Soviet Union. He visited Siberia and witnessed the renovation of the land formerly best known as a place of exile and forced labor.

At that time, the international situation was extremely complicated. Henry saw the Soviet Union exert great efforts to secure peace and prevent fascism from launching a new world war. He thought about the best ways to mobilize the people of the U.S.A. for peace.

In March 1935 Henry Winston returned to the United States and was now assigned the post of organizing secretary of the Y.C.L. in Cleveland.

Cleveland was a large industrial center with a high concentration of the working class; Blacks made up a sizable part of the city's workers. In those days, the Black population migrated en masse from the South to industrial centers. The

migration coincided with the economic crisis, mass unemployment and the strike movement. In this situation open clashes occurred between Black and white workers. This called for an experienced political activist, enjoying prestige among Blacks and capable of strengthening solidarity and convincing the masses of the need for unity of action. Henry Winston was that activist. Max Weiss, at that time Secretary of the Central Committee of the American Y.C.L., described Henry Winston as one of the most prominent and capable Y.C.L. leaders, who played an important role in the struggle against bourgeois-nationalist tendencies among the Black youth movement.

But Henry did not work in the Cleveland Y.C.L. for long. The January 1936 Y.C.L. Conference elected him organizing secretary of the League's National Committee, he moved to New York and has lived there ever since.

In the summer of 1935 the Seventh Comintern Congress was held in Moscow. It highlighted the growth of the revolutionary forces among the international proletariat and the ideological consolidation of the Communist parties on the basis of Marxism-Leninism. Anti-Leninist, Trotskyite factions in the Communist parties had been ideologically defeated, and the parties had forged staunch Marxist-Leninist cadres. That cadre had by that time emerged in the Communist Party of the United States too, and it included Henry Winston. The Seventh Comintern Congress armed the Communist parties and the working class with a militant program of action against fascism and the war threat.

That threat was growing with each passing

day. Nazi Germany invaded the Rheinland and moved its army closer to the French border. A hotbed of war developed in the center of Europe. In 1935 fascist Italy launched a war to annex Ethiopia. In 1936 a civil war broke out in Spain, with Germany and Italy backing the fascists who rebelled against the republic's government. That same year nazi Germany and militarist Japan signed the so-called Anti-Comintern Pact, soon joined by Italy. Thus a bloc of fascist aggressors emerged preparing a world war.

Faced with this situation, the Soviet Union stepped up its peace drive. It proposed to the United States, Great Britain and France, also threatened by nazi Germany, that they set up a collective security system, but the proposal was in essence rejected. The struggle against the threat of a new world war stemming from fascist bloc became the foremost task of the international Communist movement, including the Communist Party of the United States.

Henry Winston was among those who vigorously took up the campaign. He spoke at rallies sponsored by democratic organizations to protest against the American government's acquiescence in the actions of the fascist countries and its reluctance to put an end to the activities of fascist organizations within the United States. He published articles in the press. That was when *Life Begins with Freedom*, Henry Winston's first small book, was published.<sup>1</sup>

When a fascist rebellion flared up in Spain and grew into a civil war the U.S. Communist Party

---

<sup>1</sup> Henry Winston, *Life Begins with Freedom*, New York, 1936.

aided the Spanish Republic by sending over 3,000 volunteers, both Communists and non-members. The Abraham Lincoln and the George Washington battalions were formed in Spain, later united in the Lincoln-Washington battalion of the 15th Brigade. Prominent activists of the American Communist Party were among the brigade's officers—Dave Doran, Joseph Dallett, Oliver Law, Milton Herndon (all killed in Spain), Robert Thompson, Joe Brandt and many others.

The Spanish Republic needed more and more aid. The Executive Committee of the Communist Youth International convened a world conference of Young Communist Leagues' representatives in Moscow in March 1937 to discuss stepping up aid to the Spanish Republic. Henry Winston came to Moscow as a member of the American Y.C.L. delegation. The delegates stayed in Moscow for four weeks; there were talks and exchanges of views and experience. Steps were planned on effective assistance to the Spanish Republic by forming volunteer detachments.

The American Y.C.L. delegation stopped over in France on the way home. It was Henry Winston's first visit to France, and his meetings with French Communists and Y.C.L. members were very important to him. The French Communist Party had a long record of organizing the masses, and Winston later drew on that experience.

After his return back home, a plenary meeting of the Y.C.L. Central Committee elected him Secretary of the Y.C.L. Executive, and then he was elected member of the National Committee of the Communist Party. Winston was then 27.

The young Communist, already commanding widespread respect, worked together with such outstanding activists of the Communist movement as Party Chairman William Z. Foster, Gus Hall, Benjamin Davis, and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn.

The Communist Party's vigorous activity and growing influence, especially with youth, alarmed the reactionaries. They began preparing a crushing blow against it.

In the mid-1930s, 119 pro-nazi organizations operated in the United States unhampered. The House Un-American Activities Committee, established in 1938, recognized them as perfectly legitimate and turned to investigating the activities of the Communist Party and other progressive organizations.

In 1940, Congress passed the Smith Act which described as subversive any organization accused of advocating violent overthrow of the existing government in the United States. Members of such organizations were to serve up to 10 years in prison or pay a fine of up to \$10,000 or both. Officially, the law was directed against nazi organizations and groups sympathetic to nazi Germany. Actually, however, it could be twisted to apply to the Communist Party and other progressive organizations. That was a serious threat.

However, June 1941 gave a new turn to events.

Early in the morning on June 22, 1941 nazi Germany, without a declaration of war, attacked the Soviet Union. The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people against the German invaders began. The invasion set off a wave of indignation among all those who cherished peace. Together with other progressive forces, the Com-

munist Party of the United States came out for assistance to the Soviet Union and other countries fighting against nazi Germany and militarist Japan, its ally. The Party published a statement which demanded deliveries of munitions to the countries fighting against the Axis powers and a greater war effort by the United States industry.

On June 28, 1941, the Communist Party of the United States, acting on a proposal by Party Chairman William Z. Foster, convened an emergency plenary meeting of its National Committee. Only one question was discussed: the response of the Communist Party to the new international developments. Henry Winston in a passionate speech urged Communists in the United States to do their utmost to help the Soviet Union and thereby the anti-fascist struggle against the nazis.

On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and destroyed a large part of the U.S naval forces in the Pacific. On December 8, the United States declared war on Japan and later on Germany. Nationwide mobilization was ordered. Long lines of volunteers appeared at recruiting stations. As many as 15,000 Communists went to fight in the war, including many party leaders—Gus Hall, Robert Thompson and others.

Although Japan expanded its operations in the Pacific and the U.S. Navy and Air Force fought stubborn battles there, it was clear that the Eastern Front in Europe, where the Red Army was fighting the nazis, was crucial. The Communist Party of the United States urged the Roosevelt Administration to revise its policy toward the Soviet Union.

On February 12, 1942, an Abraham Lincoln memorial rally was held in New York's Union Square, sponsored by the Communist Party and other progressive organizations. There were many speakers, and they discussed not only the role Lincoln had played in American history. They voiced their concern over the fact that the Soviet Union was single-handedly fighting nazism.

In these days, Henry Winston took part in a radio broadcast to discuss the course of war. Referring to the major defeats the nazi army had suffered, for the first time since the beginning of World War II, in the Soviet Union, he said that the Soviet Union and the Red Army, "have shown the people of the whole world how a free people, thoroughly organized and brilliantly led, can beat back the nazi hordes". He urged that America realize that "the decisive battle of Europe" was yet to be won. "Those who pose one front against another, who ask us to forget the European front, are only playing Hitler's game, are only trying to divide, confuse and divert the American people from the job ahead. That is, America, recognizing the decisive importance of the European front, must establish a full military alliance with the Soviet Union, must fulfill all of its pledges for the shipment of guns, tanks and planes to the Russian front and must hasten the day upon which a second front is established on the European continent."<sup>1</sup>

A few days later, on February 17, Henry Winston volunteered to join the armed forces. He was on active duty throughout the war. He

---

<sup>1</sup> *Daily Worker*, February 13, 1942.

was assigned to the 318 Air Base, Squadron at Tuskegee. Confronted with the widespread racism in the U.S. armed forces, and along with many other Communists who were kept from active combat roles by the U.S. military, he spent his time in the service in England and France with the public relations office. He fulfilled most of the actual duties of a First Sergeant, without being granted that rank. He also worked as a U.S. Army correspondent, writing about his unit and its activities for the press back home.

Meanwhile, back in the United States, with many Communist leaders and the more seasoned activists absent, Earl Browder, the then General Secretary of the Communist Party of the United States, developed the idea that the class struggle was outdated in the U.S.A. He alleged that "progressive" U.S. capitalism led to "class harmony" between labor and capital. In his attempts to substantiate this conclusion he referred to the Teheran agreement of the three great powers. The agreement, Browder claimed, meant that wartime cooperation in the struggle against a common enemy was a firm basis for a postwar peace and international unity, with U.S. imperialists no longer hostile to the Soviet Union, tolerant to popular revolutions in Europe and cooperative with the movement for the independence of colonial peoples.

The "international unity" Browder advocated envisaged national unity too—that is, class collaboration in the United States. In his talk of "national unity", Browder, contradicting obvious facts, maintained that Black and white workers enjoyed equal rights and that, consequently, it was no longer necessary for the Black popula-



tion to fight for its economic, political and social equality.

Preaching "class harmony" in the postwar United States and "progressive role" of U.S. capitalism, Browder claimed that "intelligent capitalists" should control society. He asserted that the existence of a political party of Communists no longer corresponded to the practical goals of building up a mass non-capitalist movement. Therefore he advocated dissolving the Communist Party as an organization of the working class and replacing it with a non-partisan Communist Political Association.

Browder's theory of a progressive role of U.S. capitalism, of replacing the Party with some amorphous organization was resolutely rebuffed by William Z. Foster, National Chairman of the Party. On January 20 he addressed a letter to the Party's National Committee in which he harshly criticized Browder's views and categorically rejected the idea of disbanding the Communist Party. But Browder refused to discuss Foster's letter, and many National Committee members knew nothing about its contents. Thus at that stage the Party's leadership failed to rally sufficient forces to defeat that theoretically fallacious and politically dangerous course.

From May 20 to 22, 1944 the 12th Party Convention was held, with the question of dissolving the Party its only agenda item. Actually, there was no discussion at all; the convention itself lasted for a few minutes only. Browder read out his proposal on dissolving the Party, and it was supported by a majority of votes. Foster was not given the floor and was unable to present his objections.

As soon as the decision was taken, the convention was declared closed and another opened—the convention to establish a new organization, the Communist Political Association. Foster was ousted from his post as National Chairman; that position was handed over to Browder. His new title was President of the Association. Foster was in danger of being expelled from it.

Henry Winston, at that time on the far-off European Front, was included into the Association's National Committee in absentia. He could not understand what was going on. Who decided to dissolve the Communist Party and why? The Party was molded in the course of the class struggle and he had dedicated his life to it.

Communist parties in other countries were also concerned with the fate of the Communist Party of the United States. They saw that Browder's betrayal had set it on a dangerous course. The April 1945 issue of *Cahiers du communisme*, the theoretical organ of the French Communist Party, featured an article by Jacques Duclos, Secretary of the Party and a prominent figure in the international Communist movement. Wrote Duclos: "One is witnessing a notorious revision of Marxism on the part of Browder and his supporters, a revision which is expressed in the concept of a long-term class peace in the United States, of the possibility of the suppression of the class struggle in the postwar period and of establishment of harmony between labor and capital." He denounced Browder's interpretation of the Teheran Declaration, a document of a diplomatic character, as "a political platform of class peace" and severely criticized the deci-

sion to dissolve the Communist Party of the United States. "Nothing justifies the dissolution of the American Communist Party," Duclos wrote. On the contrary, the obtaining situation placed before the American Communists "tasks which presuppose the existence of a powerful Communist Party".

Before long, the letter reached the entire membership of the Association. It was published in the *Daily Worker* and the *Political Affairs*, the Association's theoretical periodical. Browder could not prevent its publication. And just a few weeks later the Association's members almost unanimously rejected Browder's opportunist theory.

A plenary meeting of the Association's National Committee was held from June 18 to 20, 1945. William Z. Foster, Eugene Dennis, Robert Thompson, Benjamin Davis, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, John Williamson and Gil Green participated. The meeting denounced Browderism and unanimously decided to revoke the 12th Convention decision and hold a new convention at the earliest opportunity. Browder was dismissed from the post of Association President and Foster was put in charge. The decision was approved by the Party organizations of all states.

On July 26, 1945, the 13th Emergency Convention of the Association opened in New York. It decided to reestablish the Communist Party and approved its Constitution which formulated its objectives and tasks. The convention again elected Foster National Chairman of the Communist Party of the United States. In February 1946 Browder, who pursued a factionalist course,

was expelled from the Party by a unanimous decision.

Soon after the 13th Convention Gus Hall, Henry Winston and other Party leaders came home from the war. Already informed of the Party's restoration, they unhesitatingly supported the decision of the 13th Emergency Convention. A plenary meeting of the Party's National Committee (July 16 to 18, 1946) acting on Foster's proposal elected Eugene Dennis General Secretary of the Party and put Henry Winston on the Central Committee. Winston was appointed organizational secretary, replacing John Williamson, who became labor secretary. Organizational work emerged as one of Winston's Party occupations.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn said in that period that Winston "has splendid abilities as a mass leader, an orator and organizer... I used to be in a Defense Committee office next to his Y.C.L. office, and the firm, pleasant and efficient way he handled the many and different problems of youth then indicates to me now a preparation and fitness for Organizational Secretary."<sup>1</sup>

Henry Winston tackled his job with enthusiasm. When Browder tried to set up factions in the Party organizations of Chicago, Philadelphia and San Francisco (his supporters were few but very active), Winston immediately went to those cities and explained to Communists there the great damage Browder had done to the Communist Party, to the entire working class, exposing him as a blatant enemy of the Communist movement.

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Worker Magazine*, August 11, 1946, p. 2.

## UNDERGROUND AND IN PRISON

The defeat of nazi Germany radically changed the international alignment of forces in favor of socialism, which spread beyond the confines of a single country and emerged as a world system. At the same time, the capitalist camp had suffered huge losses and was now weaker than before the war. The second stage of the general crisis of capitalism began, manifested, among other things, in a powerful upsurge of the national liberation movement and collapse of imperialist colonial rule. Contradictions between the popular masses and the monopoly bourgeoisie sharpened and the class struggle intensified. The working class became more politically conscious and better organized. Communist parties wielded greater prestige and influence.

The postwar wave of mass antimonopoly movements swept the United States. Antifascist and antimonopoly sentiment was widespread, numerous large-scale strikes and demonstrations of servicemen demanding demobilization were staged, the Black people stepped up their struggle. The Communist Party became increasingly active.

The reactionaries responded by persecuting the Communist Party. In July 1948 the authorities invoked the Smith Act and arrested 12 members of the Communist Party's National Committee, including Henry Winston.

The arrest had been prepared long in advance. FBI agents and police stoolpigeons had infiltrated some Party and other progressive organizations. The arrest of the Party leaders was repeatedly put off only because the evidence of the agents provocateurs was so unconvincing that the New York Federal Grand Jury could not justifiably issue a warrant. So the FBI decided to railroad the case.

On July 20, 1948, FBI agents arrested 12 Communist Party leaders in New York and other large cities. They were charged with conspiracy to advocate, or teach, the "violent overthrow" of the government. The only "evidence" of their guilt was the fact that they advocated Marxism-Leninism. The authorities declared that that doctrine preached overthrow of governments "by force and violence". But the Communist leaders were not accused even of "advocating" this, but only of "conspiracy to advocate" at some future time.

On January 17, 1949 the framed-up trial of 11 Communist Party leaders (William Z. Foster's case was postponed because of his ill health; he was under house arrest) opened in the New York Federal Court in Foley Square. It lasted for 9 months.

In the opinion of many the trial of the Communist leaders was reminiscent of the notorious Reichstag fire trial in Nazi Germany. A steering committee for the campaign to free the Communist leaders was set up which included 25 ex-army officers who had won high decorations during the war.

The Party leaders were kept in prison, and brought into the courtroom handcuffed and under

guard. Under the pretext of guarding the court building and preventing demonstrations which might interfere with the due process of law, 45 plainclothesmen and 38 police officers were stationed in the courtroom and near it. About 400 police officers and 14 mounted policemen patrolled the entrance to the building, preventing anyone from even approaching. *The New York Times* wrote that it was the largest police detail ever to guard a trial.

The defense asked that the police be removed, at least from the courtroom. But Judge Harold Medina denied their request.

Thousands of people daily picketed the court building. They carried posters saying, "Stop the Trial of Communist Party Leaders", "Dismiss Charges Against Champions of Freedom", "Leipzig 1933—Foley Square 1949".

The charges had been fabricated long before the trial. But for appearance's sake they were announced after the hearings began and based on evidence supplied by stoolpigeons. The chief informer was Louis Budenz, an FBI agent who had infiltrated the Party and been a member for several years.

Budenz and several other "witnesses" for the prosecution—stoolpigeons, FBI agents, renegade Party members, etc.—were called to "explain Marxist precepts" to prove that the Communist Party harbored criminal intentions. The evidence these people supplied was so absurd that the audience laughed; it even nettled Judge Medina, a mercenary who knew from the very first day what was expected of him. Conviction was a foregone conclusion.

George Marion, an American journalist, gave

the following description of Budenz's evidence in his book *The Communist Trial. An American Crossroads*. "Asked if there was anything about force and violence in the discussion between June 1945 when the Communist policy change began and October 10, 1945 when Budenz left the party, this transpired:

(From the record)

"*Budenz*: There was no specific reference to the overthrow of the government by force and violence but the whole discussion in the *Daily Worker* was over that question.

"*Gladstein* (defense attorney—V.M.): Was over what question?

"*Budenz*: Over the question of adopting the Marxist-Leninist position, the Leninist line, which is the overthrow of the Government of the United States by force and violence.

"*Gladstein*: Did it say anywhere in the *Daily Worker* that the Marxist-Leninist line is the overthrow of the government by force and violence?" *Budenz*: Of that I cannot be sure but every Communist knows what the Marxist-Leninist line is."<sup>1</sup>

Even a copy of *A Short History of the CPSU* was used as an exhibit proving that U.S. Communist leaders studied Leninism, a doctrine "preaching violent overthrow of the United States government". "Evidence" was cited to argue that the U.S. Communist Party supported plans for a Soviet invasion of the United States.

Marion quotes the court record detailing the evidence given by one Nicodemus, a witness for

---

<sup>1</sup> George Marion, *The Communist Trial. An American Crossroads*, Fairplay Publishers, New York, 1950, pp. 103-04.



the prosecution, who had infiltrated the Party two years earlier. According to Nicodemus, on Christmas Eve 1945 Al Lannon, a leader of the Party (who was not among the accused at that trial), attended a Communist meeting in Cumberland, Maryland. "Lannon pointed out to me ... that the Red Army in Siberia ... was a strong force and that ... the Russians could invade Alaska ... and they could even destroy Detroit." Ostensibly, Lannon had said the Russians had a good air force and would invade the United States with air support.<sup>1</sup>

As soon as the accused began to speak, the absurdity of all this evidence became apparent.

Henry Winston and the rest of the accused refuted the lies of informers. Winston's statements were a condemnation of imperialism and racism. "I am a Negro. I have experienced jim-crow. I have seen lynchings. I have experienced segregation, brutality of every possible kind, insults and abuses, and I have always searched for a program for my people that would liberate them from this type of oppression.

"This is my life ... and I shall never forget the fact that the Communist Party was the first organization in this country which offered a program for my people as well as my class."<sup>2</sup>

The cross-examination by the judge and the jury which lasted for several days failed to intimidate Winston or his comrades. The judge kept interrupting and threatening to silence them. The audience, even those who hated Communists and welcomed the trial, could not help admiring

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from *The Worker*, March 6, 1960, p. 12.

the way they conducted themselves. In Winston's final speech he denounced the organizers of the frame-up and called it a step toward fascism.

In October 1949 the court sentenced each defendant to a five-year prison term and a large fine. They appealed to the Supreme Court for a review of the case. On November 2 they were freed on a heavy bail and on condition that they remain in New York City.

Working people in different parts of the city welcomed the Communist Party leaders who had fought the reactionaries for nine months. Henry and his comrades were tireless: they spoke at rallies and marched in demonstrations. A mass demonstration was staged in Harlem where people hailed their favorite leaders: Benjamin Davis, former New York City Councilman, Henry Winston, and Robert Thompson, members of the Party's National Committee Executive. The three Communists led a column of several thousand people, both Blacks and whites, coming from other parts of the city to join them. Paul Robeson marched together with them. Numerous floats bearing posters moved alongside the torchlit procession. In the center of Harlem a rally was staged. Amid thunderous applause and cheers Robeson congratulated the Communist leaders on their return from prison. Davis, Winston and Thompson told the rally they were back to go on fighting for the people's rights and that no court would stop them.

After the rally the demonstrators marched to a building where several thousand people were waiting for the Communist leaders. Though the demonstration was peaceful the police tried to disperse it and arrested several people. But

the crowd stayed on. Finally, the cops withdrew, and the meeting inside the building proceeded smoothly.

Similar demonstrations were held elsewhere too. Having to stay in New York City, Henry Winston concentrated all his efforts on rallying Black and white New Yorkers in a fight for peace and the interests of the working people. Henry worked in Harlem and the Bronx, where they still remembered him from the 1930s, when he had been organizing the unemployed.

Waiting for the Supreme Court's decision on their appeal, the convicted Communist leaders remained politically active. They had to use every hour of freedom to strengthen the Party. Holding a convention was among the major tasks facing the Communist Party at the time. The 14th Convention, which completely routed Browderism, had long been past. But the arrests of the Party's leaders and many activists, their detention and the 9-month-long trial, and persecution of the Party under the Smith Act—all combined to create the need to hold a national convention and work out the line of struggle for the period ahead. The situation was quite serious.

Reprisals against progressive forces became unprecedentedly strong in the 1950s, and persecution of the Communist Party intensified. Congress continued debating the issue of "Communist threat" and on September 23, 1950 it passed the McCarran Internal Security Act—antidemocratic, anticommunist and generally one of the most reactionary pieces of postwar legislation.

Under this act, leaders and members not only of the Communist Party but also of all other progressive organizations listed as "subversive"

or described as "Communist front" were to register with the Department of Justice. Members of the Communist Party and "Communist-front" organizations were barred from holding jobs in government agencies or the defense industry and from foreign travel. The Communist Party and "Communist-front" organizations were to submit to the authorities their membership lists with addresses, annual financial statements and sources of revenue. Violations were punishable by 5 to 10 years in prison and a 10,000-dollar fine.

In the event of a declaration of war, or an invasion of the United States, or an insurrection, the new legislation postulated, members of "Communist-front" organizations were to be detained in specially established concentration camps and prisons, and that without trial.

Thus, two legislative acts were used against the Communist Party, the Smith and the McCarran Acts.

The Communists invoked their constitutional rights and refused to register. But all too frequently they were denounced by stoolpigeons, and then arrests followed.

Consolidation of the Party was a particularly urgent task in conditions of anticommunist hysteria. That was why the Party's leadership decided to call the 15th Convention in December 1950.

The need to hold the convention was also rooted in the danger of Left sectarianism which had emerged in the Party and against which Lenin had warned in his *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder*. Certain members maintained that the reactionary imperialist quarters were so powerful that struggle against

them was virtually useless; therefore, work among the masses was out of the question; therefore, work in the labor unions should cease and Party membership should be reduced.

On the eve of the convention, rallies were staged in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Harlem and in the Madison Square Garden. They were attended not only by Party members but also by sympathizers who came to welcome the leaders of the U.S. Communist Party, to express their solidarity with them and demand that the verdict be revoked.

Despite the persecution of the Party, on December 28, 1950 the 15th Convention of the Communist Party of the United States opened in Harlem. FBI agents were frantically trying to learn where it was being held. The FBI was eager to harass the 200 Communist delegates. The delegates came to the convention singly, some used cars, others came on foot by elaborate routes taking them through obscure bystreets and backyards.

The delegates rose and gave a big hand to the members of the Party's National Committee who had behaved so admirably during the trial and who were now on the podium.

The leaders knew that if they were arrested and jailed, left deviators could become more active and secure the support of some of the members who did not realize the danger of the deviation. The deviationists had to be exposed, the Party's tasks identified and its members oriented toward vigorous action against the reactionaries and the monopoly onslaught.

The speeches Gus Hall, Henry Winston and Benjamin Davis delivered at the convention helped both the rank-and-file and medium-level leaders grasp not only the difficulties awaiting

the Party but also the danger inherent in the left deviation. The 15th Convention of the Communist Party of the United States called on U.S. Communists to become more active both in progressive labor unions and in the unions led by reactionaries who followed the course pursued by the imperialist quarters.

In his speech, Henry Winston denounced some Party leaders who were showing bureaucratic inclinations. He especially elaborated on the work Communists were to conduct in the unions. Party members were to educate the working class politically, organize the unorganized and secure a close interrelationship between the economic and the political aspects of working-class struggle. Winston stressed that economic struggle alone led to opportunism and collaboration with the monopolies. That was important because recently some left and Communist union leaders and activists had forgotten the importance of political struggle and been caught in the quagmire of opportunism.

Winston also touched on the major aspects of the Party's cadre policy. He emphasized the importance of establishing and maintaining close contact between the Party leadership and rank-and-file union members: "The job of leadership is not alone to guide and direct the work of others—it is also necessary to learn ... from the members and the workers. Separation from the membership, from the workers can result only in bureaucracy, in placing oneself above the Party, above the interests of the workers.

"Secondly, it is necessary to show the utmost vigilance in noting and checking the corrupting influences of our present-day society on the

thinking and living habits of some comrades, to expose these influences in the interest of the comrade himself, but primarily in the interest of the Party as a whole.

“Thirdly, it is necessary to eliminate all self-complacency, cliquish and ‘family circle’ atmosphere in relationships between Communists, especially rooting out all elements of false praise and flattery. For, as one wise comrade put it, flattery corrupts not only the flattered but the flatterer as well. Fourthly, it is necessary to apply criticism and self-criticism in the molding of Party cadres. Criticism and self-criticism are not to be applied on occasions—on holidays—so to speak. They must be applied daily, as indispensable weapons in the examination of the work of our Party and the individual cadres... Only by learning the lessons from mistakes can our Party cadres develop Communist methods, habits, and qualities of leadership.

“Finally, only those leaders can withstand the pressures of enemy ideology, can relentlessly fight against opportunism in practice, who constantly strive to master Marxism-Leninism—the great liberating science of the working class which alone gives us the confidence in the inevitable victory of the working class, headed by its Communist vanguard. Those who see only backwardness, immobility and disunity in the working class are bound to ignore the essential truth that it is the working class that possesses all the necessary qualities to bring about the transformation of society and build Socialism.”<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Henry Winston, *What It Means to Be a Communist*, New Century Publishers, New York, 1951, pp. 10-11.

The Party's National Committee widely distributed that part of Winston's report as a separate pamphlet entitled *What It Means to Be a Communist* and instructed all local Party organizations to profoundly study its provisions.

Subsequently, Winston was to return many times to the issue of educating the Party's cadres which he raised at the 15th Convention: that issue was closely connected with the question of strengthening the Party as a whole, the latter invariably being his direct responsibility as National Organizational Secretary.

The 15th Convention was a milestone in the history of the Communist Party of the United States. It showed that despite the persecution and reactionary reprisals the Communist Party was alive and capable of carrying on the struggle.

On June 4, 1951 the Supreme Court upheld the verdict of the Federal Court of the N.Y. district. Even before the Supreme Court finished considering their appeal, a committee of the convicted Communist leaders had consulted with William Z. Foster and decided that Eugene Dennis, John Williamson, Irving Potash, Jack Stachel, Benjamin Davis, John Gates and Carl Winter were to appear in court on July 2, as they were supposed to, while Gus Hall, Henry Winston, Gil Green and Robert Thompson were not to surrender at this time. Each of them was to draw up his own plan of "going underground" assisted by his closest and most loyal comrades and friends.

On July 2, 1951, the seven leaders appeared in court. "Where are the rest?" Judge Ryan asked. The seven were silent. The judge repeated the question. On behalf of the seven, Benjamin Davis



made a statement in which he denounced the Foley Square verdict as "a crime against democracy, against the working class and against Negroes". Judge Ryan interrupted Davis saying there was no need for a "philosophical discourse". Davis, however, went on to speak about a "democracy" dominated by injustice and racism. "Like my people," he said, "I have never enjoyed freedom in this country." The judge read out the Supreme Court decision. Police officers handcuffed the convicted Communists, and threw them into a police van which brought them to jail. There they were held for four days.

On July 6, the Party leaders were handcuffed in pairs (one of them had to be shackled to a policeman). At night they were transferred in an armored car and under heavy guard to the Federal Prison in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania. Most were still en route to their assigned penitentiary. Lewisburg was a stopping point for federal prisoners, in addition to being a federal prison.

On July 2, Attorney General MacGrath ordered the FBI to start the search for the escaped leaders of the Communist Party. He declared that all those aiding them would be brought to court. Those aware of the whereabouts of the escaped and declining to reveal it would be sent to jail for 6 months and fined up to 1,000 dollars.

On July 5, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover called on the American public to aid in the capture of the wanted men and offered a large reward for information on their whereabouts. Still, time passed but the FBI failed to find any clue as to where the four Communist leaders were hiding.

Bourgeois newspapers published the FBI-supplied photographs and detailed descriptions of the wanted leaders. They encouraged the population to hunt down the Communists. Still, no one responded to Hoover's appeal. And anyway the FBI was wasting its time looking for the four men in New York: they had left the city according to their separate plans.

Gus Hall was the first to be traced by the FBI. Later, Robert Thompson was arrested. Then in early 1956, the Party decided that Gil Green should give himself up, but that Henry Winston should not yet reappear. FBI agents combed Harlem and the Bronx where they thought he might be hiding. "Wanted" posters with Winston's portrait were displayed throughout the country, with reward money offered. But nothing came of it.

For five years Henry Winston stayed underground, but in contact with his Party and still helping to give leadership to its struggles.

A New York *Daily News* correspondent once reported from Guatemala that, according to reliable sources, Henry Winston and Gil Green (then still at large), two of the Communist leaders who had failed to report to prison, were allegedly in hiding in Guatemala, where the "Communist-controlled" Arbenz government had provided them with jobs at a power plant in the jungle. The newspaper asserted that the secret police of Mexico, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic followed the fugitives up to Guatemala which, the journalist alleged, had turned into a Communist base in the Western hemisphere for trained agitators and subversives from Europe.

The correspondent reported that Winston and Green had initially escaped to Mexico and then

disappeared for several months. They spent some time, he claimed, in the Soviet Union and returned to Mexico in the summer of 1952. But since the Mexican government took a tough stand on Communists, the two surfaced in a Pacific seaport in September and boarded a ship. A motor launch took them across Guatemala, from the Pacific coast to Puerto Barrios, where they reportedly talked with Fortuni, Secretary General of the Guatemalan Labor Party, who decided to hide them at a remote government power station Santa Maria, 20 miles from the town of Quezaltenango.

Apparently, the Central American secret police mistook some other fugitives for Green and Winston. However, the very reference to information supplied by the police authorities there means that the United States enlisted the aid of Central American police agencies in tracking down the Communist leaders.

Those were the years of particularly rabid persecution of the Communist Party. In August 1954 a new provision was added to the McCarran Act, which barred members of "Communist-front" organizations not only from leading positions but even from clerical jobs in labor unions. It was virtually a control of Communist activities statute. The U.S. Communist Party was officially declared to be an "agent of a hostile foreign power" and was deprived of all the rights, privileges and immunities enjoyed by other political organizations.

But even faced with these great odds, the Communists never ceased fighting.

After Gil Green had begun to serve his sentence, the Party decided that Henry Winston

should also now surrender to the authorities. On the eve of giving himself up, he sent a letter through his friends to several newspapers. "Reiterating my innocence and protesting the flagrant miscarriage of justice in my case, I now enter prison with confidence that the American people will defeat the McCarthyites and Eastlands." (Eastland was a racist Senator from Mississippi).

He said he was sure the people "will restore the Bill of Rights to its proper place and will put an end to the Smith, McCarran and other anti-democratic laws". Since his conviction in 1951 "important changes have taken place. Our country and the world today are at peace. McCarthyism has been set back on its heels. The dark smog of hysteria and fear is clearing as fresh winds of hope circle the globe. The future for our people looks brighter."<sup>1</sup>

Simultaneously, Winston submitted to his publisher an article he had written while underground, entitled "Gradualism and Negro Freedom". He predicted that the younger generation of Blacks in the South, which by that time had not yet been in the forefront of the events, would soon launch a heroic struggle. Profoundly convinced that the Black population would rise to fight for its freedom and equality, he wrote: "The Negro people are united as never before ... around a program of democratic rights and are militantly advancing the struggle for their own liberation...

"Conditions are changing in the South. These changes have been developing ever since the

---

<sup>1</sup> *Daily Worker*, March 5, 1956, pp. 1, 8.

'30s. They are continuing to grow. The most impressive example of this vital fact is that it is no longer possible to speak of the Solid South." He specially stressed that Blacks in the South were fighting for "the future of a democratic South".<sup>1</sup>

Henry Winston always closely followed the Black liberation movement, especially in the South, analyzing its gains and mistakes and always convinced that the Black citizens of the United States would not stop halfway but fight until complete victory. At the same time he noted that this victory was hardly possible under capitalism: only socialism guarantees complete equality to people of different nations and races.

As Winston approached Foley Square, the police rushed in from all directions and converged on him. Handcuffed, he was shoved into a police van. Now he had to serve 3 more years on top of the old 5 year term.

He was imprisoned in Terre Haute, Indiana, in the jail where Benjamin Davis, another Communist leader, had served his term. It was a jail for felonious offenders and Black prisoners. Whatever their offense or however long their sentence, Black prisoners were treated as dangerous criminals in the Terre Haute jail. And here, too, racial discrimination was in evidence: white prisoners were given easier work, longer walks and so on.

Winston's arrival was an event. Both the prisoners and the guards were curious about the way

---

<sup>1</sup> Mike Newberry, *The Cruel and Unusual Punishment of Henry Winston*. Published by the Harlem Committee to Free Henry Winston, New York, 1960, p. 22.

he behaved among convicts. The prison authorities, instructed to do everything to rule out any escape attempt, also watched him closely. But Henry Winston was quiet and composed. People liked his open, friendly smile, and he soon won their respect. Young Black prisoners came to him for advice, showed him letters from home and discussed things. Many were depressed in prison, some were desperate, and talks with Winston brought them at least some relief. He was affectionately called "Pope", although many were too old to be his sons. No one ever saw him sad, although he had enough reasons to be dejected.

The authorities treated him harshly. To them, he was more than a dangerous criminal. The prison guards tried to turn his life into hell. He was often deprived of food and walks, and forced to share his cell with white underworld types who bullied the Black prisoner, trying to pick a fight. Henry could have dealt with them easily. But he knew that if he rose to the bait he would be beaten and thrown into solitary. His jaw set and fists clenched, he refused to be provoked.

The jailers were treating Black prisoners especially brutally also because at that time, beginning from 1955, a mass Black movement rose in the South, unprecedented in scope and intensity. It started with a boycott of municipal buses in Montgomery, Alabama, which lasted for 381 days. Non-violent action was used against segregation on municipal transport. The struggle, which soon spread to other cities, gave rise to a new mass Black organization—the Southern Christian Leadership Conference led by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In the fall of 1957 the world was shaken by bloody clashes in Little Rock, Arkansas. The Governor ordered the National Guard to prevent several Black children from attending an all-white school. Threats and incitements against Blacks for daring to go against segregation were rampant for several months and stopped only the following year when the President sent paratroopers and the Federal National Guard to Little Rock.

Although it all occurred far from Terre Haute, the impact was felt in the prison too. The prison authorities, afraid that prisoners might in some way express their indignation at the reprisals against their people, canceled the prisoners' walks. The prison guards were especially malicious toward Winston. They did their utmost to crush the militant Communist. They "forgot" to bring him meals. White convicts were induced to insult him.

While in jail, Henry learned that the Communist Party was facing a new serious threat. Aside from the vitriolic persecution, the Party had to beat off fierce attacks by revisionists and those who wanted to have the Party disbanded. John Gates, who had served his prison term earlier than the others and was now Secretary of the Communist Party's National Committee came forward with revisionist ideas. Like Browder in the 1940s, he preached "American exclusiveness". Gates asserted that class contradictions were disappearing in the United States, and so was the need for a Communist Party as such. He tried to argue that Marxism was alien to America and questioned the principle of proletarian internationalism.

Dismissing the heroic record of the Communist Party of the United States, Gates suggested replacing it with a mass non-partisan organization. With Gus Hall, Robert Thompson, Gil Green, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and Henry Winston still in jail, and William Z. Foster confined to bed, Gates decided to bring off his plan at the forthcoming 16th Party Convention.

But the Marxist-Leninist core of the Party, led by Foster, was also preparing for the convention. Many Communists rallied around Foster, Jack Stachel, Eugene Dennis, Benjamin Davis, James Jackson, Irving Potash, William Weinstone, Hyman Lumer, George Morris and other Party leaders. They were determined to uphold the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism and keep the Party alive.

On the eve of the convention, the imprisoned Party leaders were informed, on Foster's instructions, of the struggle over the question of the Communist Party's future. All unanimously opposed Gates' views and actions. Through his friends who visited him in prison, Henry Winston told Foster he supported him fully.

John Gates was sure of victory at the convention, especially since on the eve he had managed to win over the California Party organization, the second largest in the nation, and the Western Pennsylvania organization.

The revisionists came to the convention with their own draft program and draft constitution and a list of candidates for the leadership of the new organization they wanted to replace the Communist Party.

The delegates were divided into three groups—the revisionist (Gates' supporters), the Marxist



(Foster's supporters) and the centrist. The revisionists tried to win over the centrists who held no firm views on the future of the Communist Party, and hoped that the absence of Foster would weaken the position of those advocating the need to preserve the Party.

Foster was aware of the complexity of the situation. He prepared a speech and asked one of the comrades to deliver it. Meanwhile he decided to attend the convention without announcing his intention.

The 16th Convention of the Communist Party of the United States opened in February 1957. Members of the steering committee were elected and took their seats on the platform, and it looked like there was nothing to prevent John Gates from gaining the initiative. But suddenly, William Foster appeared on the platform. A storm of applause broke out and everyone rose to welcome the Party's chairman. There was confusion among Gates' supporters.

Foster's speech was delivered. It rebuffed the revisionists and demonstrated beyond doubt the need for a Marxist Communist Party in the United States. The speech turned the tide.

Foster rejected the revisionist idea of setting up a "political action association", convincingly argued that a Communist Party was necessary, and declared firmly that Marxism-Leninism was the Party's theoretical basis.

The convention defeated the revisionists and adopted a resolution saying: "This convention goes on record to affirm the continuation of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. Our chief task is to strengthen, rebuild and consolidate the Communist Party and overcome its isolation. This

convention opposes the transformation of the Party into a political or educational association."<sup>1</sup>

Thus the Marxist-Leninist forces led by William Foster repulsed revisionist attacks and saved the Communist Party, the party of the U.S. working class.

No matter how hard they tried, the prison authorities failed to isolate Henry Winston from the outside world, from the Communist Party. From prison, he sent a brief note to his comrades, welcoming the victory won by the Marxists-Leninists.

The revisionists tried to offset their failure by keeping up the propaganda of their views in the *Daily Worker*. Only in February 1958 a plenary meeting of the National Committee expelled Gates from the Party. That was a blow to revisionism. But the struggle against it went on.

Meanwhile, Henry Winston was still serving his prison term. His resilience, his physical strength and willpower helped him withstand the hard conditions—for some time. But then he began to notice that something was going wrong. His eyes began to tire very quickly. Once, when he was carrying his tray to a table in the prison mess hall, he suddenly felt terribly weak. His knees buckled and he almost fell. The prisoners sitting near saw it; they helped him sit down at a table. The spell took a long time to pass. A few days later, when he was moving furniture in the prison furniture workshop, he again felt it coming on and then lost consciousness. The spells

---

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings (abridged) of the 16th National Convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A.*, New Century Publishers, New York, 1957, p. 327.

kept recurring. The guards thought he was faking it. "Get up, you lazybones," one of them yelled at him when overwhelmed by weakness Henry had to sit down.

He had never complained about anything, but this time he asked the prison doctor to examine him and do something to help. But the warden only smirked: "What you need is a brain overhaul. No doctor can help you while you go around with your Communist notions."

Winston's health deteriorated with each passing month.

The lawyer John Abt, who had defended the Communists in court, visited him in jail. Abt saw Henry's worsening condition and realized that the prison doctors neglected it. It took the lawyer a lot of effort to have a consultation held. But the prison doctors prescribed, of all things, seasickness pills.

Henry's health continued to deteriorate. Headaches became more intense and a heart condition developed. Only when he began to lose his eyesight rapidly did the prison authorities allow a new medical consultation. It turned out Henry Winston was suffering from a brain tumor.

Henry's condition became known outside the prison. Protests started against the inhuman treatment. Progressive Americans demanded immediate medical assistance for him. But the authorities ignored the protests. Moreover, even letters from relatives and friends were withheld from Winston. The illness progressed. He could barely stand. Meanwhile, in the outside world an international public campaign developed in his defense, and its pressure made a transfer to the prison hospital possible. Then he was al-

lowed to have an operation at his own expense in Montefiore Hospital, in New York City. His friends found a surgeon and raised the money to pay for the operation.

The day of the operation came. The patient's condition was very serious. Mike Newberry, who was on the recently organized Committee to Free Henry Winston, gives this description of what happened at the Montefiore: "In the white tiled operating room a man lay mute, immobile, paralyzed on the hard table while a silent surgeon began one of the most delicate of all operations—the removal of a brain tumor. He began to cut into the skull... The man was paralyzed in both legs by the pressure of the brain tumor on his nerves. He was blind. He was helpless. ...In minutes the life of the unconscious human being, awaiting his fate at the fingertips of the surgeon's skill, would begin its teetering balance between life and death."

An armed guard had been placed by the operating room with orders to keep a close watch over the patient. The guard listened at the door and, satisfied that the prisoner was there, again walked the corridor.

Behind the door, the surgeon went on with the operation. The tumor had grown so much that it had severed the optic nerve. Fortunately, it turned out to be benign. The operation lasted 7 hours, 7 hours of touch and go.

The prison authorities were sure they were rid of the Communist leader. As Murray Kempton wrote in the *New York Post*, they made "the assumption ... that Henry Winston would die".<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *New York Post*, March 9, 1960.

Many people doubted that the operation would be successful. But in the end, life won.

The surgeon finished the operation and staggered out of the operating room, and the guard rushed up to him. The surgeon said, "He'll live". He was about to add, "But blind forever", then looked at the gaping guard and walked out silent.

That happened on February 2, 1960. Henry Winston remembers that day well.

After the operation his condition remained serious. Additional treatment was in order. Doctors at the Montefiore were insisting that Winston should be allowed to recuperate fully in a hospital for serious cases. But the prison authorities were adamant: they wanted Winston back in jail. As the first stage they decided to transfer him to the prison hospital in Springfield, Missouri, the so-called medical center. The patients there called it "the snake pit"; it was actually a prison for drug addicts and the mentally unbalanced. Conditions were unsanitary—a hundred patients in a huge ward and not enough lavatories. There were only five nurses to a thousand patients. Prisoners were scared of the "medical center": most patients died there.

So, even though Winston survived the operation, he would not survive the Springfield Medical Center. Henry's friends were aware of the danger he faced. John Abt brought charges against the prison authorities and submitted an appeal. The district attorney opposed it as groundless. Federal Judge Waterman, however, had to delay Winston's transfer to the "snake pit" until April 4. Many people were anxious to know whether

after that deadline Winston would be sent to Springfield or allowed to continue his treatment at the Montefiore Hospital.

In March Henry Winston's lawyers sent a petition to President Eisenhower asking for executive clemency, which the President was empowered by the Constitution to grant. A month later the petition was returned to the senders. David Kendall, the President's Special Counselor, wrote that the petition would probably not be acted on until reports on Henry Winston's condition were received from the hospital. As a matter of fact, such a report had been sent to the President's office together with the petition.

After Kendall's reply the doctors again examined Winston and sent another report to the White House. There was still no response. Meanwhile, the press published more and more lists of prisoners granted clemency—gangsters, thieves, gamblers. President Eisenhower refused to apply this right to Winston.

On April 5 it was reported that Winston was to be transferred from the Montefiore to a Public Health Hospital on Staten Island in New York. The Communist Party called for a public campaign in the United States and the world at large to free Henry Winston.

William Patterson, member of the National Committee of the U.S. Communist Party who served on the Committee to Free Henry Winston, toured the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, France and Britain. He urged greater efforts in the campaign to defend Winston's life.

The Staten Island hospital resembled a prison, although conditions there could not be compared to what would have awaited Winston in the

“snake pit”. He was not allowed to leave his room—in fact, his cell. An armed guard was posted at the door. Henry’s friends wanted to send an instructor to him to teach him the Braille system for the blind, but the prison authorities refused permission. Winston was treated worse than a dangerous criminal.

The medical experts who examined Henry Winston insisted that he should be freed in order to undergo the necessary treatment. But in October 1960 the authorities decided to send him back to jail.

Jail again. This time it was a Federal Prison at Danbury, Connecticut, not far from New York.

World public opinion was in an uproar. The campaign to free Winston gained new strength. The Communist Party sponsored the Committee to Free Henry Winston and many progressive leaders joined it. At the Committee’s initiative, the picketing of the White House began, and workers, young people, whites and Blacks daily beleaguered it, demanding freedom for Henry Winston. The campaign was waged abroad too. Fidel Castro offered to exchange Winston and other political detainees for the prisoners taken during the Bay of Pigs invasion.

Henry’s willpower was so great that, transferred from a hospital back to a prison cell, blind and weakened by the operation, he did not lose heart, he took up physical exercises, learned to walk and developed his own system for that, studied Braille and analyzed all that his friends told him during visits about events in the nation and the world. Later he said that he had been possessed by one thought—not to give up, not merely to survive but retain his strength for the struggle.

Still, the illness exacted its price. Headaches returned and grew stronger each day. The jailers still refused to improve his conditions. The news about this spread outside the prison and demands that Henry Winston should be freed grew more and more persistent.

Norman Thomas, leader of the Socialist Party of the United States, wrote an indignant letter to *The New York Times* protesting against the way Winston was treated: it was "an extraordinary act" which "has no explanation except a built-in refusal of Washington to give to Communists the humanitarian consideration extended to all prisoners, including gangsters".<sup>1</sup>

Reinhold Niebuhr, a prominent philosopher, expert on international law and professor at the Union Theological Seminary, said in a statement for the press: "If not mercy, let there be justice... I have long believed ... with many other anticommunist friends that Mr. Winston should be paroled, partly because the Supreme Court has invalidated other Communists of like offense under the Smith Act, and his confinement, therefore, seems to be unjust."<sup>2</sup>

Niebuhr's statement was especially typical of public sentiment. He was well known for his anticommunist views. But he saw the treatment of Winston by the authorities as inhuman.

In Washington, the Baptist Ministers Convention chaired by the Revs. R. L. Tucker and W. D. Sommerville, came out in defense of Winston and appealed to the authorities: "Whatever you may think of this man's political con-

---

<sup>1</sup> Mike Newberry, *Op. cit.*, p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.



victions, and we hold no brief for them, in all honesty, we should be untrue to our calling if we did not urge upon you to take immediate steps to intervene and help save this man from what we believe will surely be slow death, if he is returned to prison."<sup>1</sup> The appeal stressed that the imprisonment of Henry Winston would be a blow to the struggle for civil rights of the Black population.

In January 1961 John F. Kennedy assumed the Presidency. Immediately, he came across the Winston case. A new flood of letters poured into his office and the Board of Parole. Crowds gathered in front of the White House. Prominent public figures—Eleanor Roosevelt, the Black labor leader A. Phillip Randolph, the Rev. Hawkins, a Black minister, Arthur Swift, Vice-President of the New School of Social Research, Ashton Jones, a preacher famous throughout the South, and others—urged President Kennedy to free Winston.

The Committee to Free Henry Winston sent a new petition to the White House, this time to a Democratic President. An answer from the official in charge of parole was not long in coming: the President promised to review the case. However, time passed, and the President was in no hurry to keep his word.

On April 2, 1961 Henry Winston celebrated his 50th birthday in the Danbury jail. His friends sent him messages of congratulations, expressing the hope that he would soon be free.

On April 11 Henry Winston was transferred from the prison to the hospital on Staten Island where

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

he had been kept before. He was still under surveillance by FBI agents, and the opportunities for treatment were inadequate.

Meanwhile, his friends outside continued the struggle. On May 1, 1961 the Bronx Committee for the Freedom of Henry Winston again wrote to President Kennedy urging executive clemency: "Mr. Winston, an honored World War II veteran, was ready to give his life for his country in the war against Hitler. Why then is he held in prison for no act of crime at all? Traitor Axis Sally who called on the American Army to lay down its arms and surrender to Hitler is released from prison by the Board of Parole. Why?

"People of decency and humanity urgently appeal to you to save our country from the shame of such injustice by returning Mr. Winston to his loving wife and his two fine children."<sup>1</sup> On behalf of the Committee, the appeal was signed by its chairman Joseph Pollichetti.

On June 21, 1961 President Kennedy granted Winston executive clemency. He was released. The struggle to save the life of a Black Communist leader ended in victory.

When Henry was told about the Presidential order, at first he couldn't quite take it in. He had been waiting for it every day, confident that the worldwide movement for his freedom would bring results. But it was difficult to grasp that the ordeal was really over. He had spent 10 years underground, in prison and in hospitals.

At the prison gates, his friends were waiting. He was led outside, and there were hugs and congratulations, and Henry recognized the voices

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Worker*, May 7, 1961.

of his old friends—Gus Hall, James Jackson, Editor of the *Worker*, and many other leaders of the Communist Party.

The jailers deprived Henry Winston of his eyesight but failed to break his fighting spirit. But he needed at least some rest under a doctor's supervision. The doctor imposed a strict regimen, quite imperative for his patient after such a long prison term. But Henry was eager to start work at once. He held a press conference on July 5. It was certainly a big event, attracting correspondents from many newspapers, radio and television companies. Henry Winston was seated in the central chair at a long table, flanked by Gus Hall and Benjamin Davis. He had not yet recovered from his illness, but he was smiling, the same smile he had smiled ten years before.

There were a lot of questions. Some said they doubted whether he would be able to work as before. Henry replied firmly: "Despite my handicap, I intend to resume my part in the fight for an America and a world of peace and security, free of poverty, disease, and race discrimination... I return from prison with the unshaken conviction that the people of our great land, Negro and white, need a Communist Party fighting for the unity of the people, for peace, democracy, security and socialism. I take my place in it again with deep pride. My sight is gone but my vision remains."<sup>1</sup>

The news of Henry's freedom circled the globe. He and the National Committee of the Communist Party of the United States received messages of greetings from all over the world. A Cuban

---

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, August 1961, p. 2.

worker wrote to him offering one of his eyes. A letter from Rosa Shafigulina, a Soviet student from Tomsk, said: "I offer you my eyesight. I am young and my eyes are excellent. You need them for your future struggle. You must accept."

At that time William Z. Foster, Honorary Chairman of the Communist Party of the United States, was undergoing medical treatment in a sanitarium near Moscow. He had arrived in the Soviet Union in January 1961, on an invitation by the Soviet Therapeutics Society. Foster followed the struggle for Henry Winston's freedom waged in the United States and abroad, receiving daily reports on all developments in it.

He was told of Winston's release on the morning of July 1. "At last. Free at last," he kept repeating, a copy of *Pravda* reporting the news in front of him. Foster pinned great hopes on such people as Gus Hall, Henry Winston, Robert Thompson, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, James Jackson and Benjamin Davis. He placed special emphasis on the Black Americans' movement to secure their rights. Uniting this movement with the struggle of the working class was the goal Foster himself had given so much to further. He was glad that the Communist Party had produced prominent Black leaders.

Back in 1937 an organization called the Southern Negro Youth Congress had been set up in Richmond, Virginia, with participation of the Communist Party. In his *History of the Communist Party of the United States*, Foster set great store by this organization which had been playing an important part in the struggle against racial discrimination. Henry Winston, James

Jackson and other Communist Party members had been among its leaders.<sup>1</sup>

Now Winston was free at last, and Foster was glad to learn that he was invited to come to the Soviet Union for medical treatment; he was eagerly waiting to see Henry.

In Moscow Foster met the world's first space-man Yuri Gagarin. It was several weeks after Gagarin's flight. Foster was anxious to meet this man. At that time I often visited Foster in the sanitarium and was present during their talk. Foster had always been interested in cosmology and he asked the cosmonaut about the view of Earth from outer space. He asked Yuri if he had managed to make out anything on the territory of the United States. Gagarin replied that now he knew the United States better than from books before. "There," Foster said, "my friends are waging a courageous struggle for socialism which, we are confident, will come to our country too. Soon one of these people is coming to Moscow. It's Henry Winston, who was underground and then in prison. Try to meet him, he deserves your handshake. When your spaceship was passing over our country, he was in jail, already blind but still confident of victory."

Henry Winston did meet Yuri Gagarin, but he did not see Foster. The veteran fighter died on September 1, 1961; Henry Winston arrived in the Soviet Union only on September 28. The U.S. government took a long time to grant him permission to leave the country, invoking the same old reactionary McCarran Act.

---

<sup>1</sup> See: William Z. Foster, *History of the Communist Party of the United States*, International Publishers, New York, 1952, p. 311.

## BACK IN THE RANKS

September 28, 1961. Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport. Thousands of Muscovites were there to welcome Henry Winston. Red bunting, flowers and posters saying "Greetings to Comrade Henry Winston", "Welcome, Dear Comrade Winston", "Long Live the Communist Party of the United States".

Throughout the flight Henry had not slept one minute, thinking about what was awaiting him in the Soviet Union, what Soviet doctors would say. James Jackson said later that it had taken a lot of effort to calm his friend.

Henry could not see the people who surrounded him, but he felt their warmth and friendship. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Chairperson of the National Committee of the Communist Party of the United States, who was in the Soviet Union at the time, and representatives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union all came up to Henry.

The first thing Winston asked was to be taken to Red Square, to Lenin's Mausoleum. Henry remembered his first visit to the USSR: 28 years ago he, a young revolutionary, had been there. He stood before the Mausoleum a long time and then entered it together with his children. Then he walked by the Kremlin wall where William

Haywood, Charles Ruthenberg and John Reed, three great Americans, founders of the Communist Party of the United States, were buried.

Henry spent three years in the Soviet Union, from late 1961 to 1964, recuperating. Soviet doctors did all they could to restore his strength. He visited many Soviet cities, met many people, talked to scientists and public activists. That was the country which had routed nazi Germany, already recovered from its wounds and building communism. He spoke before workers and told them of the Communist Party of the United States, its selfless struggle for the interests of the American working people, for peace and friendship with the Soviet Union.

Meetings with children impressed Henry greatly. There was the unforgettable visit to the Moscow Young Pioneers Palace. The schoolchildren were celebrating the anniversary of their International Friendship Club. Henry Winston and Alvaro Cunhal, General Secretary of the Portuguese Communist Party, were invited to attend. They were elected honorary members of the Club. Said Henry Winston: "It is wonderful that you are brought up in the spirit of brotherhood and friendship. You are the future of your country, builders of communism. And your Club is doing a very useful and necessary job calling for friendship among children throughout the world."

Henry Winston attended the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. He was a member of the delegation of the Communist Party of the United States, one of the 80 delegations of Marxist-Leninist parties there. The U.S. delegation also included Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and James Jackson. Congress delegates

rose to welcome the staunch American Communists. Everyone was looking at Winston: the delegates had done much to win freedom for him. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, head of the U.S. delegation, rose to speak.

Stressing the international significance of the 22nd C.P.S.U. Congress and the importance of the accomplishments achieved by the Soviet people, she contrasted this progress to the state of affairs in the capitalist world. She spoke about the Communist Party of the United States and its difficult struggle against the monopolies and for the people's democratic rights. "Compared to other members of the big family of Communist parties, our Party is small, but it is fighting in the stronghold of world imperialism. We are proud and happy to be present at this congress together with representatives of all the fraternal parties. We hail these parties and express our solidarity with them. We are inspired and heartened by the fact that we are here together with the victorious parties of the socialist countries, with parties from countries which have recently thrown off the colonial yoke, and with large fraternal parties of other capitalist countries."

"Comrade Henry Winston, member of our delegation," she added, "is one of our Party's foremost heroes. He spent a long time in jail and lost his eyesight through criminal treatment by the authorities. Having rejoined our ranks, Henry Winston symbolizes the unshakable fighting spirit of our Communist Party, the Negro people and the American working class."

An ovation broke out in the hall.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn handed over to the pre-



siding council a message of greetings signed by herself as Chairman of the Party and Gus Hall, General Secretary. Hall could not attend the congress because the Federal government refused to issue a passport to him.

In the intervals Henry Winston walked in the foyer to feel the atmosphere of the congress. He was surrounded by friends. People shook his hand and hugged him. Many delegates spoke English and struck up conversations with him. These were people who held the same convictions as Henry.

During one of the intermissions, Henry Winston met the cosmonauts Yuri Gagarin and Gherman Titov, delegates of the 22nd C.P.S.U. Congress. Henry recalled April 12, 1961, the day of Gagarin's flight: he had been in the hospital on Staten Island when news of the Vostok spaceship reached him. At that time a handshake with the pilot of the ship had seemed impossible. The meeting came as a surprise to the cosmonaut too, although he knew about Winston, had learned about him from Foster when visiting him in the sanitarium near Moscow. Now Henry Winston and Yury Gagarin were talking as if they had known each other for many years.

Henry Winston led an active life in the Soviet Union. For example, he took part in celebrating the 50th anniversary of *Pravda* and attended the big reception held in the Kremlin to honor the occasion. Leaders of the Communist Party and the Soviet government shook the hand of the American Communist and wished him success in the struggle waged by the Communist Party of the United States. Henry's speech at the reception was warmly welcomed. He expressed his

profound gratitude to the Soviet people, Soviet Communists, leaders of the C.P.S.U. and the Soviet government for their contribution to the drive for peace. Winston especially thanked the Soviet participants in the campaign to free him.

Soon after the congress Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and James Jackson left for the United States. Henry Winston stayed behind for medical treatment. However, alarming news came from the United States: a new grave threat was looming over the Communist Party. Under the McCarran Act, still in force, the Party was charged with failure to register with the Department of Justice as an "agent of a foreign power".

The term for registration expired on January 20, 1962. Neither the Communist Party had registered as a "subversive organization" and "agent of a foreign power" nor any of its members as a "subversive element". On the following day the authorities demanded that Gus Hall, General Secretary of the Party, James Jackson, Editor of *The Worker*, Benjamin J. Davis and other Party leaders appear before the Washington Grand Jury to give testimony. None of them did appear.

On December 11, 1962 the District Court in Washington, D.C., opened hearings of the Communist Party case of violations of the McCarran Act. The Communist Party fought against the new reactionary encroachment on its rights as a political organization. It exposed the reactionaries' schemes to use the new trials aimed against the Communist Party and many other progressive organizations so as to deal with those fighting for peace, civil rights and social progress. Special concentration camps were prepared for victims of these trials. In one of their

statements, Gus Hall and Benjamin J. Davis pointed out that concentration camps for those convicted under the McCarran Act existed in Arizona, Florida, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma and California. They demanded that these camps be torn down and the McCarran Act repealed. "These camps," they declared, "reveal the fascist character of the McCarran law... Congress should deny the use of any funds for concentration camps and fascism in our land."<sup>1</sup>

Both the Grand Jury and the Department of Justice knew that neither the leaders nor the rank and file of the Communist Party would register as "foreign agents". So they decided not to drag out the trial. On the sixth day of the hearings the Columbia District Court declared the Communist Party to be guilty as charged. The Party appealed to the Supreme Court, asking it to reverse the verdict.

Henry Winston was in the Soviet Union when he learned about the new threat facing the U.S. Communist Party. He joined the struggle at once. Within a few months, he toured Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the GDR and Hungary. He called on the world public to express its solidarity with the Communist Party of the United States and protest against the steps taken by the American ruling quarters. In an interview to the Moscow correspondent of *L'Humanite*, Henry Winston said: "The Party has contested the legality of this procedure. The struggle is difficult. This is the struggle not only for the rights of the American Communists but also to defend the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Worker*, May 13, 1962.

Rights. It is also a struggle to defend peace... The Communist Party of the United States is not alone in its struggle. Many big American organizations demand that the McCarran Act be repealed. Again, as in the past, action by world public opinion can play an important part."<sup>1</sup>

In Moscow, Henry Winston met with representatives of Communist parties of capitalist countries and of revolutionary-democratic parties of Asia and Africa. He had especially long talks with comrades from Africa and Latin America. Henry decided to write a book on U.S. neocolonialism, prompted by the fact that Earl Browder was still disseminating, in the United States and abroad, his book *Marx and America*, written in 1958. In it, Browder advocated his anti-Marxist and anti-Leninist proposition that the United States was in an exclusive position and class contradictions eased in it, and that, combined with its rapid economic development, this indicated that Marxism was inapplicable on American soil. In contravention of facts he denied that the United States was growing richer at the expense of other nations and alleged that it was striving to eliminate the colonial system as such.

Henry Winston was in prison when Browder's book was published. He had a chance to read it when he was free. Then, while in the Soviet Union, he began to write a book to expose Browder's thesis about the so-called new policy of U.S. imperialism toward colonies. Although he spent 30 months in the Soviet Union, he did not have much time for theoretical work: he could

---

<sup>1</sup> *L'Humanite*, January 26, 1962.

only do it in a sanitarium near Moscow, where he was under very strict medical supervision. He received a lot of invitations, and trips in the Soviet Union and to other countries took up much of his time.

Still, he was working doggedly on his articles and the book. Articles from the Soviet press were read to him and recorded on tape. He often talked with Soviet scholars. His meetings with African fighters yielded much useful information.

Recuperating near Moscow, Winston met Tim Buck, Chairman of the Communist Party of Canada, an outstanding figure in the international Communist movement and close friend of William Z. Foster. In the early 1930s, when Henry Winston had left for the Soviet Union, Tim Buck, then in hiding from the Canadian authorities, had come to the United States on Foster's invitation. His American friends had hidden him in New York. He had been in contact only with Foster and those guarding the house.

But Tim Buck had heard much about all U.S. Communist leaders, including Henry Winston, and, before coming to the Soviet Union, had taken a keen interest in Henry's life.

Both men were glad to meet. They took walks together, in the evenings they sat to talk on park benches or in the ward. Henry Winston wanted to visit Canada and learn about the situation there firsthand. He was closely connected with the labor movement, and many Canadian unions—those of auto, steel and radio and electrical workers—were amalgamated with U.S. unions in the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (A.F.L.-C.I.O.). The question of the onslaught of the monopolies

on the workers' rights was very important both in the United States and in Canada.

But now Henry Winston and Tim Buck were busy discussing the issue of the national liberation struggle in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

In late August and early September 1962, the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences sponsored a conference of Marxist scholars from Europe, the Americas and Asia in Moscow. Problems of contemporary capitalism, and the position and struggle of the working class in capitalist countries were discussed.

Henry Winston spoke about the prospects of the struggle by the American working class, and exposed attempts by U.S. bourgeois propaganda to convince workers that capitalism had become "progressive", or turned into "people's capitalism" which allegedly benefited all Americans. This ideological apologia, he stressed, could not prevent the intensification of the working class struggle against capitalist domination. That was borne out by the increased number of strikes in the United States.

He followed the reports at the conference with great attention. He was verifying his own conclusions. All he heard confirmed his understanding of the neocolonialist policy of the United States.

Winston used every opportunity to study the problems that interested him. He frequently came to the Institute of World Economics and International Relations. He talked for hours on end with its researchers, and they admired his profound and comprehensive knowledge of the issues they discussed. All these meetings and talks helped Winston in his theoretical work and research.

Winston virtually completed his work *The Chal-*

*lence of U.S. Neocolonialism* in Moscow. A few finishing touches to update the book was all that remained to be done when he returned home. In 1964, Peace and Socialism Publishers in Prague brought out the book, and in 1965 it appeared in the United States.

His medical treatment in the Soviet Union was progressing successfully, his health improved. But it was impossible to restore his eyesight. Truly a man of steel, of remarkable willpower, he did not lose heart and was only anxious to join his friends in their struggle back home as soon as possible.

On February 27, 1964 Henry Winston flew home.

In April a plenary meeting of the National Committee of the U.S. Communist Party was held, attended, for the first time since 1950, by all its members. The meeting set up the Party's leading bodies—the Secretariat and the National Bureau of the National Committee, which comprised all the old leaders. The meeting reelected Gus Hall General Secretary of the Communist Party and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Chairperson of the Party.

Gus Hall specially stressed the importance of Henry Winston's and Gil Green's return to leadership—these tried and tested comrades, as he said, who possessed extensive experience in collective efforts. Winston, elected to the Secretariat, was to deal with the struggle for peace.

The United States witnessed an unprecedented upsurge of the mass democratic and antiwar movement in the 1960s, especially in the latter half. The drive against the Vietnam war, a war unleashed by U.S. imperialism, was intertwined with the movement for democratic rights, against

the onslaught by the reactionaries and monopoly capital on the living standards of the working people, and against the mounting racial oppression. The reactionaries and the ultra-right attempted to seize power in the country. They nominated Barry Goldwater, a Senator from Arizona and a leading ultraconservative, as the Republican candidate in the forthcoming Presidential election.

The Republicans' domestic political program was based on extreme individualism and absolute laissez faire. Goldwater opposed any legislative prohibition of racial discrimination. He demanded restraining Blacks, students and all those "toeing the Communist line".

Goldwater's foreign policy program preached brinkmanship and the arms race. In actual fact, the Republican candidate promised nuclear war. The Republicans vowed to launch an all-out effort to win a "decisive victory over Communism". Goldwater's election as President of the United States would have spelled national catastrophe. That was why the country's progressive forces fighting against the war in Vietnam and the arms race were determined to prevent the ultra-right from securing power.

Labor unions and Black organizations were in the forefront in the 1964 election campaign. The unions played an important part in the antiwar movement in general. The Communist Party, while appreciating the new stage in the struggle of the American working people, pointed out its flaws too, above all, fragmentation. That was why the Communist Party aimed at rallying all the progressive forces.

Henry Winston, entrusted with the very re-



sponsible mission of organizing the peace drive, plunged into work with enthusiasm. He had not yet appeared at mass rallies since his return from prison. Meanwhile, his job was to help initiate rallies where well-known public figures could speak and call for unity of all progressive forces. But his very first public appearance proved that he was up to the task.

On July 9, the Communist Party organized a large rally to mark an important victory over reaction: under pressure from progressive quarters, the Supreme Court had ruled unconstitutional the McCarran Act provision banning the issue of passports for foreign travel to Communist Party members. The Supreme Court also declared unconstitutional the provision in the Landrum-Griffin Act, another piece of anti-Communist and antilabor legislation, barring Communists from holding leading positions in labor unions. This ruling was in response to an appeal by Archie Brown, a Communist and a leader of the West Coast longshoremen's union, barred by the local court from discharging his duties although he had been elected to the post by union members.

Viewed against the background of increased activity on the right, these Supreme Court rulings were very important. That was the occasion the Communist Party wanted to honor at the rally. Several thousand people filled to capacity a hall in the Riverside Plaza Hotel in New York. Union representatives, intellectuals, students and Black activists gathered there. The rally was opened by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. Gus Hall in his speech stressed that the democratic freedoms existing under capitalism were the result of the struggle by the people, and said that this

struggle should continue, because the country was threatened with fascism and a new reactionary onslaught as evidenced by the racist rampage in the South and the consolidation of the ultra-right around Goldwater in the election campaign. Hall urged the creation of a broad popular coalition of democratic forces, which would be able not only to defeat reaction at the forthcoming election but also to bring pressure to bear on the government.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn gave the floor to Henry Winston. He was nervous: that was his first address before a mass audience in a long time. He recalled his last speech in Harlem after the trial, when he and other Party leaders had been waiting for the Supreme Court ruling on their appeal. Applause and shouts of welcome broke out. Henry raised his hand, and his voice resounded through the vast hall.

Winston spoke for an hour. After paying tribute to the Communist Party which led the struggle to have anti-Communist, anti-democratic legislation repealed, he spoke about the prestige it enjoyed throughout the world as a force in opposition to most brutal reactionaries. Everywhere he had been during his travels he had seen people of progressive convictions express their solidarity with the American Communists and with other forces fighting against the reactionary, aggressive policy of U.S. imperialism and the designs of the ultra right.

He warned that the reactionary offensive in the country would intensify, unless the people's movements grew; that the U.S. ruling quarters stepping up aggression in Southeast Asia would try to suppress the antiwar movement. Condemn-

ing the administration for the continued aggression in Vietnam, Winston called on the American people to decisively demand an end to U.S. interference in Vietnam. He also urged a stronger campaign for the recognition of socialist Cuba and establishment of normal diplomatic and trade relations between the United States and Cuba. His speech was greeted with enthusiastic applause.

Henry was active in mass rallies and demonstrations against the aggressive foreign policy of the United States and the racism of the ruling quarters. The movement for an immediate end to the war in Vietnam rose to an unheard-of scale throughout the nation, involving workers, young people and women. Like many other Party leaders, Henry Winston appeared before large audiences, calling on the people to pool their efforts in the struggle against reaction and the country's militarization.

In the 1964 elections, Goldwater, the candidate of the far right, suffered a crushing defeat. In December the Communist Party summed up the outcome of the elections and published *The '64 Election Mandate and the Road Ahead*. The document evaluated the political situation which had emerged after the elections and stressed the need to preserve and strengthen the liberal-progressive coalition which had defeated the ultra-right. The Communist Party pointed out that progress after the elections would only be possible if the separate groups and movements consisting of labor activists, Blacks, other ethnic groups, educators, authors, scientists and fighters for civil rights and disarmament realized that they should find a basis for permanent coopera-

tion, strengthen their ties and achieve unity.

Mapping out the chief objectives of the forthcoming campaign to rally the progressive forces in American society and to make them more active, the Communist Party leadership accorded priority to the struggle for peace and an end to the cold war, for peaceful coexistence and the elimination of colonial rule.<sup>1</sup>

In June 1965, the Communist Party issued a new statement which explained the adventurism of Washington's foreign policy and warned about the danger to world peace. In early 1965 the United States intervened in the Dominican Republic where general elections had toppled a reactionary government supported by U.S. imperialism. The United States aimed at suppressing the democratic movement in the Dominican Republic and restoring the reactionary regime there.

The Communist Party urged an end to the U.S. aggression in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic. That was what the vital interests of the Americans demanded—white, Black, working and unemployed.

In the summer of 1964 Elizabeth Gurley Flynn died. Both the above statements of the Communist Party were signed by Gus Hall and Henry Winston as the vice-chairman of the Party.

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Worker*, December 6, 1964.

## **NATIONAL CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY**

In the early 1960s the Communist Party of the United States stepped up its activities. It restored its contacts with the working class, vigorously defended the working people's interests, took part in the movement against the war in Vietnam, in the drive against the offensive of the right which supported Republican Senator Barry Goldwater, and strengthened its ties with Black organizations. All that attracted broad and obviously growing public attention to the Party. Its leaders were invited to speak in universities, on television and the radio. This stirred up the reactionaries. They still hoped to force the Communist Party into registering as a "foreign agent" and use this as a pretext for throwing Communists and democratic activists into concentration camps. The ruling quarters in the United States were trying to isolate the Communist Party from the masses.

In 1964 the Supreme Court was still considering the appeal the Communist Party had lodged in 1962 after the verdict by the Columbia District Court. In early November 1965 in Washington that court opened a new trial of the Communist Party.

The new trial strongly resembled the 1949 Foley Square frameup of the Party's leaders. In 1949, the leaders had been on trial; now it was the Party itself. As in 1949, evidence was supplied by paid FBI agents who had infiltrated not only

the Communist Party but also all other organizations which criticized Washington's policies. Posing as Party members, they said at the trial that they recognized the legitimate nature of the registration demand and were ready to register as "agents of a foreign power". The trial's sponsors hoped that Party members would follow suit, and this would weaken the Party's leadership too.

Not a single member of the Communist Party rose to the bait. Those posing as members and willing to register showed their true colors as soon as examination began. They contradicted themselves and tried to invoke trumped-up documents about the ties of the Communist Party to a foreign power. These "witnesses" even included members of the American Legion, one of the most reactionary organizations in the United States. The public in the courtroom saw FBI agents detailed to accompany the "witnesses" coach them about their testimony.

On November 15, 1965, during the trial, the Supreme Court completed its consideration of the appeal the Communist Party had lodged in 1962 and ruled that the McCarran Act provision demanding registration for the Communist Party and its members with the Department of Justice was unconstitutional.

The Communist Party had been fighting for this for 15 years, since 1950, when that draconian law had been passed. As a result, orders to register leveled against more than 40 Communist leaders were dropped.

In a statement on behalf of the Communist Party, Gus Hall stressed the importance of the occasion:

"The Communist Party takes this occasion to call for an end to all antidemocratic laws that infringe on the Bill of Rights. It calls for a halt to any further persecutions under the McCarran Act and for the tossing of this Act and the Smith Act into the garbage pail of our national history.

"We also announce that within a month's time we shall publish the Draft of a Communist Program for our country so that all Americans can judge for themselves what it is the Communists propose and what they really stand for."<sup>1</sup>

Gus Hall declared that in the present situation the Communist Party was planning to hold an open national convention and take steps to ensure its wider participation in the forthcoming Presidential elections.

Immediately after the Supreme Court ruling Gus Hall, Henry Winston and many other leaders of the Communist Party of the United States received scores of invitations to speak in universities and colleges. In their statements they described the Supreme Court ruling as the beginning of a new stage in the life of the Party, when it could be able to go to the people without fear of reprisals and explain its program.

Thus in the mid-1960s the Communist Party won its right to engage in legitimate activities. This enabled it to begin restoring its ties with the masses—the working class, national minorities and the younger generation.

While during the semi-legal period, work among the masses had been more restricted and often sporadic, the new situation required the Com-

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Worker*, November 16, 1965.

munist Party to organize its activities in a more clearcut fashion and to specify its tasks with due regard to the needs of the moment. In other words, the situation called for a Party program reflecting postwar developments. Lenin once wrote that "without a program a party cannot be an integral political organism capable of pursuing its line whatever turn events may take. Without a tactical line based on an appraisal of the current political situation and providing explicit answers to the 'vexed problems' of our times, we might have a circle of theoreticians, but not a functioning political entity."<sup>1</sup>

This precept guided the action of the U. S. Communists too. But its implementation became possible only now that the Party had regained some of its legal rights. A commission was set up, and Winston served on it.

A very close deadline was set for preparing a draft program. In February 1966 the commission completed its work. The plenary meeting of the Party's National Committee convened at the time decided to hold a convention which was to open a discussion of the draft. The previous, 17th Convention had been held in 1959. Seven years had elapsed, full of remarkable developments both within the nation and on the international scene. These were to be reflected in the Party program.

Shortly before the plenary meeting, the National Committee received an invitation to send a Party delegation to the 23rd Congress of the Commun-

---

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Election Campaign and the Election Platform", *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 280.



ist Party of the U.S.S.R. A court order still prevented Gus Hall from leaving the country. The meeting decided to send a delegation consisting of Henry Winston, the Party's Vice-Chairman, and James Jackson and Hyman Lumer, members of the National Committee.

Henry Winston, head of the delegation, was to address the congress, meet all kinds of people in the Soviet Union, speak at rallies and talk to scholars and workers. He prepared for the trip thoroughly. On March 27, 1966 the delegation of the Communist Party of the United States arrived in the Soviet Union.

The C.P.S.U. Congress opened on March 29 in the stately hall of the Kremlin Palace of Congresses. C.P.S.U. leaders, the best workers, collective farmers and scientists were seated on the dais, together with heads of delegations from foreign Communist parties. Henry Winston was one of them. It was the second time he attended a congress of the C.P.S.U. This time he was head of the delegation and would speak in this capacity.

April 2 was his birthday, he turned 55. It was on that day that he spoke at the Congress. He addressed the delegates and guests and he knew that millions were listening to him in the Soviet Union. Henry Winston said: "We have come here from the country which is the mainstay of world imperialism, a country whose policy is in glaring contradiction to the way history progresses, to your country, whose policy is fully in accordance with this progress. We have every reason to be proud because we are part of millions of people fighting in the United States against the policy of imperialism."

Winston spoke about the mounting mass action against the policy of the administration responsible for the infamous and destructive war in Southeast Asia, about demonstrations protesting against the Vietnam war and bringing to the streets 100,000 in late March 1966. Working in the thick of these movements, the Communist Party of the United States took an active part in the emerging broad popular alliance bringing together people from various social strata in the drive to end the war in Vietnam. In the whirlwind of mass action against the war, against economic sacrifices and political reaction, Winston said, the Communists were firmly leading the expanding socialist trend in the struggle for peace, freedom, democratic rights and economic security.

Henry Winston conveyed a message from Gus Hall, General Secretary of the U.S. Communist Party, to the 23rd Congress of the C.P.S.U. Gus Hall regretted he was unable to attend this historic forum but hoped to visit the Soviet Union after the national convention of the Communist Party of the United States.

Winston's speech was punctuated by stormy applause. He said at the end: "We U.S. Communists demand from the U.S. government:

"Quit Vietnam,

"Quit the Dominican Republic,

"End interference in the affairs of Cuba and other Latin American countries, in the affairs of Africa and Asia."

During the Congress, the U.S. delegation visited several enterprises and educational establishments. On April 7 they came to the Kirov Watch Works in Moscow. The workers welcomed their

honored guests; a meeting was held in the assembly shop during a break.

Members of the delegation visited Volgograd and the Central Asian Republics and took part in the May Day celebration. On May 7 they left for home to join in the important work nearing completion to prepare the Party convention.

On June 22, 1966 the 18th National Convention of the Communist Party of the United States opened. In the past seven years the Party had been subjected to harsh repression and persecution. America's Communists had worked tirelessly to defend their Party and be able to hold their convention. Now it was held in Webster Hall in downtown New York. The convention was attended by 300 delegates from 40 states. The press and a large group of non-Communist guests were invited. The State Department refused to grant entry visas to representatives of Communist and Workers' parties from abroad. Newsmen from bourgeois papers who met the convention delegates at the entrance to interview them noted that many of them were under 25.

The convention lasted five days. The delegates discussed the report delivered by General Secretary Gus Hall and the draft Program which had been debated for four months. Many indistinct provisions were revealed in the draft program. Recent changes in the international situation were not reflected adequately, and the convention decided to continue the discussion of the draft in each local Party organization.

The convention adopted a new Constitution of the Communist Party, U.S.A. That was of great importance for the Party's organizational con-

solidation. Now the Constitution stated that the Communist Party of the U.S.A. was a political organization of the working class and its theory was based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism. The struggle for the immediate interests of the workers, the farmers, the Blacks and all other working people was described as its chief objective.

The Constitution declared that exploitation of man by man, poverty, wars, racism and ignorance could be eliminated only through a socialist restructuring of society. The Communist Party said it was possible to attain socialism peacefully and democratically by launching a mass political and economic struggle. But this called for working-class leadership and the closest unity of the working class, the Black people and all those exploited and oppressed.

The convention unanimously adopted several resolutions which reflected the situation in the United States and the world. One of them expressed solidarity with the Vietnamese people and stressed that the Communist Party would step up the drive against the criminal U.S. aggression in Vietnam and involve new strata of the American people in the antiwar drive.

A draft resolution on the situation in Latin America was approved. It protested against the armed intervention by the United States in the Dominican Republic and against U.S. interference in the affairs of other Latin American countries. It also condemned provocative actions against Cuba and demanded the dismantling of the U.S. military base in Guantanamo. However, by the time of the convention new facts concerning U.S. interference in the affairs of Latin American

countries had surfaced and the delegates, having approved the draft in general, instructed the new National Committee of the Communist Party to update and then adopt the draft.

Delegates submitted so many proposals on each agenda item that the convention was unable to consider them all in detail. The new National Committee was, therefore, instructed to improve draft resolutions on the situation of farmers and agricultural laborers, on the struggle against racism and anti-Semitism, and on the situation of native Americans.

The closing session of the convention was to elect the National Chairman. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn had died two years ago. The delegates expected Henry Winston, the Vice-Chairman, to become Party Chairman. And when Gus Hall announced Winston's nomination, a storm of applause broke out. Gus Hall was reelected General Secretary of the Party.

In a brief statement, Winston noted that the 18th National Convention of the Communist Party was a landmark in the history of the Party and the nation. He also stressed the significance of the fact that a Black and a white comrade were elected to lead the Party, as an indication of the true internationalism of the Communist Party and a fine example for the entire nation, a case of fraternal equality of Black and white Americans.

The Communist Party convention was a timely step. The Party was mobilized for vigorous struggle. The Black liberation movement reached a new, as yet unequaled high. In the "long hot summer" of 1966, unrest spread to 120 cities. The police and the National Guard were brutally

suppressing these outbreaks. Powerful Black protest followed the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King in the spring of 1968. This famous leader of the civil rights movement, head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, was shot and killed on April 4, when he was preparing a mass Poor People's March on Washington. The week from April 4 to 11 witnessed more outbreaks than throughout the year 1967. The blood-stained statistics of the week were 43 people killed, 3,500 wounded and 7,500 arrested.

Following the King assassination, Gus Hall and Henry Winston made a statement for the press on behalf of the Communist Party. They spoke of the great role Martin Luther King had played in the struggle against racial discrimination, poverty and the militarism of the U.S. ruling quarters, and demanded a speedy investigation and arrest of the criminals.<sup>1</sup> They called on all white Americans concerned about the country's future to think seriously about their responsibility for racial oppression of the Black people. They urged union leaders to critically reappraise their policy on the race issue and launch a decisive struggle for civil rights and against Jimcrowsism.

The assassination of Martin Luther King did not stop preparations for the Poor People's March on Washington. On the contrary, the preparations intensified, and, together with other progressive organizations, the Communist Party was active in them.

Henry Winston appreciated Martin Luther King highly. He stressed the importance of a turning

---

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, October 5, 1968.

point in Dr. King's thinking, when he had begun to see the need for a transition to an offensive strategy, to realize that the basis for such a transition was the power of the working class acting in alliance with the middle strata. Dr. King had started to work toward raising the role of the working class in the Black liberation movement and in the struggle for the interests of the poor and the oppressed.

The Poor People's March on Washington took place in June 1968. The government unleashed brutal reprisals against its participants. But the march emerged as an important political event. The Communist Party issued a statement saying that the march not only focused nationwide attention on the plight of millions of Americans, but also exposed the cynicism of the Administration which refused to provide jobs for Blacks and all hungry Americans while at the same time spending billions of dollars on the arms race and the genocidal war in Vietnam.

In early June 1968 the nation was shaken by yet another crime. Robert Kennedy, one of the candidates for the Democratic Presidential nomination, was assassinated in Los Angeles.

In 1968, the United States witnessed an exacerbation of irreconcilable domestic and foreign policy problems and contradictions. Prices and taxes were growing steadily, crime assumed vast proportions, Black ghettos continued to flare up, the urban crisis was worsening. The war the United States was fighting in Vietnam was the paramount issue.

Such was the background to the 1968 Presidential campaign. The Communist Party had grown enough to take part in the Presidential

elections as an independent political organization with its own Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates. The last time the Party had taken part in the elections was in 1940.

The Party resolved to discuss participation in the election campaign and decide upon the final draft of the Party Program at a special national convention to be held on July 4th weekend, 1968. On July 3, one day before the convention opened, the first issue of the *Daily World*, the new paper was published. The *Daily World* replaced the *Worker* which was published twice a week. The weekly *Worker* had at first replaced the *Daily Worker* ten years earlier, when the policies of the revisionist group around John Gates weakened the daily paper and caused it to cease publication. Now the Party and the progressive forces around it were ready to expand from the twice-weekly *Worker* to a daily paper once more.

The establishment of the *Daily World* was an important Communist achievement. In Pittsburg, for instance, where for the past 30 years not a single Marxist newspaper had been sold and the Party had conducted practically no work, the *Daily World* was now being sold at 13 newsstands.

The first issue featured an interview with Henry Winston in which he commented on the forthcoming elections and explained the importance of Communist participation in them. Winston declared that the Party was aiming to support any progressive trends which could, in the final analysis, lead the masses of workers, farmers, Black Americans and the middle strata away from the two-party system and aid in the creation of a national antimonopoly coalition. The Communist



Party, he observed, deemed it necessary to give the American people an opportunity to learn about its point of view on all issues. That was why the Party decided to nominate its own candidates and launch a nationwide campaign using television, radio, the press and mass rallies.

He recalled that the Party had been discussing the draft Program for some time, and the special convention would not only work out a Communist election policy but also adopt the draft Party Program, "the most mature, advanced and profoundly elaborated program to assist the American working class, the Black people and the entire social system in its progress toward peace and freedom—toward socialism".<sup>1</sup>

The Special National Convention of the Communist Party was held in New York on July 4-7, 1968. Winston delivered the keynote speech in which he clearly explained the Party's tasks. He profoundly analyzed the domestic and international political situation, with its striking growth of the drive for peace, against the background of the aggression of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam. That, Winston stated, was a decisive factor, especially for the United States. "No imperialist country in the world," he emphasized, "has ever experienced such a development, in which a majority of its people are in active opposition to the policies of their own government in wartime. This is a fact which has enormous meaning to us in the present. And it has enormous meaning for generations to come."

"The task before us today," Winston continued,

---

<sup>1</sup> *Daily World*, July 3, 1968.

“is to mobilize the broadest masses of the people—in the ranks of organized labor, of the Black liberation movement, of the youth in general and the students in particular, of the middle strata of our country. It is the task of bringing together Communist and non-Communist, non-fascist and antifascist, non-imperialist, pacifist and religious forces and all groups interested in saving humanity from the slaughter of imperialist aggression. It is the task of building their strength to challenge more effectively the policies of imperialism, of moving more determinedly and more decisively to compel the stopping of the bombing in Vietnam, to compel the withdrawal of American troops. These are the tasks which are placed upon us at this critical juncture in history, in a continuing struggle, in and beyond the elections of 1968, to put an end to the cold war policies of our own government.”<sup>1</sup>

Winston paid particular attention to the task set in the draft Party Program—the creation of an antimonopoly coalition. He stressed that this coalition of classes and strata exploited, oppressed and robbed by the monopolies would be effective if the working class and Black fighters for racial equality played a decisive role in it. Its program would be antiimperialist, antimilitarist and antiracist. “We are entering a period of great struggles in which millions of our people are involved. Lessons are being drawn by these millions and we must be prepared for great upsurges in this struggle and should not be surprised by them. Events which are taking place on

---

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, August 1968, pp. 1, 2.

many levels, on many fronts, are building up in such a way that a mass breakaway toward a new party is not precluded. The disintegrating tendencies within the two-party system are an expression of this fact. Thus our tactic in relation to the fight to achieve this great aim takes account of the fact that this is the main route by which millions pass to enter the highway which leads to the achievement of the anti-monopoly coalition."<sup>1</sup>

The coalition was to be shaped, first, through vigorous efforts in both bourgeois parties (Democratic and Republican) aimed at setting up independent action groups within them; second, by encouraging a mass breakaway from the two-party system; and third, by setting up independent political organizations—Peace and Freedom Parties.

Winston warned of the danger posed by the far right who had nominated George Wallace, a Southern racist and former governor of Alabama, for Presidency. This reactionary candidate resorted to demagoguery to secure mass support. "Clearly," Winston said, "the fight for an anti-monopoly coalition, the fight against the military-industrial complex, must be closely connected with the struggle against the threat posed by a Wallace."<sup>2</sup>

The convention discussed Communist participation in the elections for four days. For many delegates this was a novel question: for 28 years the Communist Party had not taken part in Presidential elections independently. There

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

were few who had been involved in the 1940 campaign.

The convention nominated Charlene Mitchell, member of the Party's National Committee and activist of the Black liberation movement, for President, and Mike Zagarell, a leader of the Party youth, for Vice-President. Henry Winston was put in charge of the Presidential Election Committee.

The Communist Party's chief aim in the election campaign was to publicize its program and explain to people its goals. The campaign gave the Communist candidates and Party leaders an opportunity to hold meetings and speak on the radio and television. The Party was emerging from isolation. To be sure, it could have its candidates registered only in two states and the District of Columbia, for in all other states anti-Communist laws banning it from election campaigns were still in force. Nevertheless, the meetings it held gathered thousands of people who wanted to know what that party, persecuted for years and just emerging from underground, was all about. They wanted to hear the people who had served long prison terms for their devotion to the cause their party was fighting for.

It was particularly important that by that time the U.S. Communist Party had established closer links with labor unions. Certain positive changes had occurred in the labor movement: it had shifted to the left and become more radicalized. Labor's demands were increasingly political and included an end to the war in Vietnam and to the arms race, reduction of the military budget, the right to organize and to call strikes, etc. The strike struggle continued to expand, and reality

itself disproved the anti-Marxist concepts downgrading the role of the working class.

In 1969, workers and students stepped up their action against the war in Vietnam.

Obviously, people became increasingly aware that the war and the militarization of the economy were connected with the aggressive nature of imperialism and that the United States was the mainstay of reaction and the prime mover of war and aggression. As the peace movement was expanding, the question of unifying all the democratic forces assumed new urgency. The forthcoming 19th National Convention of the Communist Party (April 30-May 4, 1969) was to map out the ways to attain the unity. The 19th Convention took place April 30-May 4, 1969.

The foremost significance of this convention was that it adopted the Party Program, virtually the first ever. Previously, the Party had been guided in its work by resolutions and documents on individual issues. But it had no overall program with a profound Marxist analysis of the domestic and international situation.

The Program the convention adopted noted the growth of the working-class political awareness. The Communist Party had always attached great importance to this factor because it was central to the ability of the working class to become the leading force in the antiimperialist struggle in conditions of the mounting encroachment by the monopolies on the living standards of the working masses and the consequent radicalization of the democratic movements in the nation.

Among the positive changes under way, the Program pointed to the higher political activity of the rank-and-file union members. Great atten-

tion was given to Black workers, who, the Program said, had become the most active segment of the working class and the Black people. A salient feature of the new stage in the Black liberation movement was the fact that, while continuing the fight against racial segregation and discrimination, they had taken up a struggle for economic and political equality. A trend emerged toward the convergence of the movement with the struggle of the entire working class.

Unity of white and Black workers is indispensable for success in the antimonopoly struggle. The Communist Party has been working to achieve this unity since its inception, arguing that the monopolies are the chief enemy of the working class and the working people in general. The Program stressed that antimonopoly struggle was among the foremost current and future strategic goals of the Communist Party.

Henry Winston delivered a report on the Constitution of the Party. He observed that since the 18th Convention Party membership had increased, although not sufficiently, and new Party clubs (primary Party organizations) had sprung up; very importantly, some of them had appeared in basic industries. Hundreds of Party clubs were active throughout the country, coast-to-coast. But that was not enough. Winston noted that the Party was entering a period of increasingly sharp class battles. The strength of the Communist Party, the strength of the workers was in the unity of the working class, and this unity had to be fought for.

"To organize and anchor itself in the basic industries, with the working class as its pivot, a party must understand that it must also rally

support to the fighting students, Black and white. It must be a party which gives support to any and all social struggles in defense of the vital interests of our people. The motor force in our history is centered in our class—in the working class. And our Party is a class organization, the highest form of class organization, which must help this class to feel its responsibility to itself and to the people in general. This is how we have to understand the projection of mass policies.”<sup>1</sup>

Winston stressed that the new situation called for a revision of the existing leadership structure because it did not help the establishment of closer contacts with the masses. He meant efforts to eliminate or reorganize the Party’s leading bodies which wasted time on closed meetings, the drafting of countless documents and the issuing of decrees instead of conducting practical work, solving problems of the mass movement, or taking up the creation of Party organizations in the basic industries and Black ghettos as their foremost task. Winston emphasized the need to produce “a leadership which would more fully express a Leninist style of work”.

He proposed the setting up of commissions to examine specific political and organizational questions, and systematically monitor implementation of Party decisions. The Party’s leadership, he said, must have intimate, daily relationship with the districts, with priorities given to the concentration districts.

Winston proposed the adoption of an open letter

---

<sup>1</sup> Henry Winston, *Build the Communist Party—the Party of the Working Class*, New York, 1969, pp. 8-9.

to the membership from the 19th Convention. The letter said:

"On this May Day, in the 50th year of our Party, the 19th Convention calls upon you to rally in unity and struggle, to decisively build the Party among the workers, Black and white, in the basic, trustified industries of our country.

"We are in a period of struggles which are escalating into the proportions of a storm. Such can be the only response of the working class, the Black liberation movement, the peace and student movements, to the tremendously intensified exploitation and attacks of the ruling class...

"Increasingly, the struggles for Black liberation, for peace, for student rights, for the rights of all the oppressed tend to align themselves with the class struggle...

"We live in times in which the Communist Party can and must be built in the workshops of our country. We live in times in which the rapid growth of the Party in industry is the most important imperative before us."<sup>1</sup>

The letter stressed the need to fight against racism, for unity between whites and nonwhites. To achieve this unity, Communists were to step up their work in the basic industries and encourage in every way the convergence of the class struggle with the Black liberation movement and the women's and students' movements. "The thoughts and energies of all our leadership at all levels, of the entire membership, must center on and be directed toward winning these objectives."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Henry Winston, *Build the Communist Party—the Party of the Working Class*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.



Winston called for the elimination of red tape which impeded the advancement of the Party.

A very important proposal was the one Winston made in his report about amending the Party Constitution provisions concerning the principle of democratic centralism, the paramount principle in Party work. He said that the convention should strengthen the Leninist principle of Party organization. He suggested a more clear-cut definition of democratic centralism and proposed that it be accepted. Now the Constitution stated: "The system of organization of the Communist Party is based on the principle of democratic centralism, which guarantees the unity of theory and practice, of the membership and leadership. Democratic centralism combines the maximum involvement of the membership in determining policy and in the democratic election of leading committees, responsible direction from one national center, coordinating the activity of the entire Party along common, agreed upon lines of policy."<sup>1</sup>

Winston placed particular emphasis on the need to put an end to factionalist bickering, inadmissible in the Party. He concluded with these words: "We should have faith in the future. We should have that faith because we have faith in our class, and we can have faith in our class only if we have faith in our Party. The road to victory in the struggle for peace, democracy and socialism is inconceivable without our becoming a mass party. We must become such a party. We must build our Party with that end in view."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

Winston's draft was adopted unanimously. The Constitution was amended in the section dealing with organizational issues. The National Committee was renamed Central Committee. Besides, a National Council was set up, a consultative body, to be composed of Party veterans, former National Committee and local committee members, and young Communists for whom the Council would be a school of future leadership. 71 members were elected to the Central Committee and 136 to the National Council, including the Central Committee members. Again, the Party reelected Gus Hall General Secretary and Henry Winston, National Chairman.

After the convention, Hall, Winston, James Jackson and Helen Winter attended the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties. This conference of 75 parties was held from June 5 to 17, 1969 in Moscow.

That same year, in August, leaders of the Communist Party of Cuba invited Henry Winston and a group of other U.S. Communists to visit Cuba. Later, Winston made several trips there, but that first visit left a particularly vivid impression in his memory. Winston was welcomed by thousands of people in Havana—workers, young people and veteran fighters against the Batista regime. He visited the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba. On July 26, 1953 a group of young Cuban patriots led by Fidel Castro had launched the Cuban Revolution by storming these barracks. The people of the city cherish the heroic memory of the first fighters against the Batista tyranny. Winston also met sugarcane cutters, construction workers building new villages, students and schoolchildren, and, toward

the end of his stay in Cuba, Fidel Castro.

In a statement for the press he highly appreciated the accomplishments of the Cuban people in building socialism. "Millions in our country must find out about what is happening in Cuba," he said. "The economic blockade must be lifted. It epitomizes the savagery of U.S. imperialist policies. The people can and must make Nixon put an end to this criminal course."

In 1969 and 1970 Henry Winston visited many countries. During that period, he worked hard at home, too. Among other things, he devoted much time and effort to restoring a Marxist youth organization. The Marxist-Leninist youth organization, the Labor Youth League, did not survive the severe government harassment during the 1950s and the factional divisions in the Party itself. Henry had learned about the demise of the League while in prison. He recalled later that the news had shaken him severely. That had happened almost 15 years ago. Progressive youth organizations had been springing up and expiring, torn apart by contradictions. In the 1960s, a mass Black movement emerged and W.E.B. Du Bois Clubs were set up, uniting both Black and white young people. These clubs played an important role in the civil rights struggle, in drawing young people into the antiwar movement, particularly the campaign against the U.S. aggression in Vietnam. By the late 1960s the advanced youth and the Communist Party decided to bring all together the more advanced members of these clubs who were eager to study Marxism-Leninism and find the right way to wage the fight to forge an organization which would in the future have close fraternal ties with the Communist

Party. The task of establishing a new youth organization was entrusted to Henry Winston, a man young people admired as a legendary hero.

After a period of thorough preparation, a conference of Du Bois Clubs representatives and independent socialist youth set the date for a founding convention. The conference opened in the New York Center of Marxist Studies.

The Conference, which Henry Winston attended, decided to convene the founding convention of the new organization in February 1970. The convention was held in Chicago. The new Marxist youth organization was named the Young Workers Liberation League.

Soon after, in April, the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. invited Gus Hall, Henry Winston and James Jackson to attend the celebration of Lenin's centennial in the Soviet Union. There they received Lenin Centennial Medals, awarded for important contributions to the development of Marxist-Leninist theory.

In the early '70s, Henry Winston played a prominent part in the struggle to save Angela Davis, a philosopher and outstanding activist of the Black liberation movement.

In January 1970 a prison guard was killed during a riot in the Soledad Prison. Three Blacks were accused of the crime—George Jackson, John Clutchette and Fleeta Drumgo. These three names soon circled the globe. George Jackson, the oldest of the three, had already served 10 years in prison on a trumped-up charge of having stolen 70 dollars. All three could be sentenced to death. A campaign to save the Soledad Brothers spread throughout the United States and the world. Angela Davis, who taught philosophy at the

University of California, Los Angeles, joined this campaign. Soon the three prisoners were transferred to the death house in the San Quentin Prison. Meanwhile, the California authorities began to persecute Angela Davis for her bold criticism of the existing system. She was labeled "the Red troublemaker". A search began for a pretext to deal with her. It was soon found. During the trial of the Soledad Brothers in San Rafael, Marin County, four Blacks, including Jonathan Jackson, George's brother, attempted to kidnap the judge, the district attorney and several jurors as hostages, to exchange them for the accused. In a skirmish, the judge, several jurors and two of the kidnappers, including Jonathan Jackson, were killed. A revolver was found on Jonathan's body.

Although Angela Davis was far from the scene of the skirmish, she was accused of having organized the kidnapping. It was also charged that the revolver found on one of the kidnappers belonged to her. Her name was entered on the most wanted list, and the hunt began. Finally, on October 13, 1970, she was arrested.

A campaign to save her was launched with the Communist Party playing a leading role in the Committee to Free Angela Davis.

As she wrote later in her *Autobiography*, she was confident she would be saved because Communists were fighting for her. The leaders of the committee which guided the campaign were her good old friends—Charlene Mitchell, Kendra and Franklin Alexander, Bettina Aptheker and other Communist Party members. The struggle in which she had been involved and her contacts with Communists had brought her close to the

Communist Party. When at the trial she was asked whether she was a Communist, she answered proudly, "Yes, I am a Communist Party member".

Angela's meetings with Henry Winston who came to visit her in prison contributed greatly to her development as a Marxist-Leninist. Henry admired Angela's courage. He led the campaign to defend her. In his article "The Meaning of San Rafael" he wrote: "Today, the need to build a mass movement to free Angela Davis ... and all political prisoners is a vital starting point for speeding the formation of a great, popular movement to turn back the forces aiming to push the country into fascism."<sup>1</sup>

Winston first visited Angela Davis on December 7, 1970, when she was still imprisoned in New York. They had never met before, but they knew a lot about each other. Winston came to the prison building long before the visit was scheduled to begin. A crowd of people—relatives and friends of prisoners—was waiting for the time the huge steel doors would open. They did, and everyone was admitted into a room partitioned into cubicles which resembled telephone booths. The back wall of the booth had a small window of thick, dusty glass, with a built-in telephone. The visitor and the prisoner used it to talk to each other, peering through the dim glass. The line often went dead: the conversation was monitored.

Winston was waiting for Angela. About 20 minutes passed, and he began to get worried. But

---

<sup>1</sup> Henry Winston, "The Meaning of San Rafael", *Strategy for a Black Agenda*, New York, 1973, p. 237.

then he heard Angela's excited voice. She explained the delay: she had demanded permission to meet the visitor wearing her own clothes and not prison garb. She won, and this small victory meant a lot to her, and Winston approved.

Angela told him she received many letters from all over the world. This inspired her, and she was confident that the plans to have her executed would fall through. Angela and Henry wanted to discuss many questions, but the bulb in Angela's booth started blinking: time was up. Angela asked Henry to come on the next day.

That first meeting impressed Winston greatly. "I think it is significant," he told a *Daily World* reporter, "that a Black woman from Birmingham, Alabama, whose fight against racism led her to the Communist Party, and myself, a Black man from Hattiesburg, Mississippi, whose search also led to the Communist Party, should meet for the first time in an American jail.

"My heart was warm in anticipation of meeting this courageous woman... The fight for her freedom is a new rallying cry of progressive America, Black and white, in motion. Out of this successful struggle will come a new level of unity between the various sectors of struggling America, such as the country has never seen."<sup>1</sup>

And this is how Angela Davis herself described the meeting: "From the other side of the clouded pane, he greeted me with a very gentle voice, and I felt he could see me with far greater perceptiveness than someone with perfect eyesight. He wanted to know about my health, the jail food, and how I was being treated by the of-

---

<sup>1</sup> *World Magazine*, January 9, 1971, pp. 6, 7.

ficers. He assured me that the Party was totally committed to the fight for my freedom and that he, personally, would do whatever was necessary to ensure victory."<sup>1</sup>

On the next day, December 8, Winston again visited Angela Davis. This time they met like old friends and discussed a much wider range of questions. They spoke about the Communist Party and its role in the struggle of the working people. Shortly before her arrest, Angela had started reading Marx and Lenin and continued to read their works while in prison, too. Henry Winston told her that these books would help her find answers to many burning questions. He promised to come again on December 22. But that meeting did not materialize.

Early in the morning on December 22 Angela Davis was transferred, under armed guard, to California, then under Governor Ronald Reagan (the current President of the United States). The Party urged a greater public effort to save Angela Davis. Winston came to California to meet with Angela again, to cheer her up and tell her about the struggle to save her life.

World public opinion forced the U.S. ruling quarters to back down. Angela Davis was acquitted. She regained her freedom on February 23, 1972. And a few days before, the 20th National Convention of the U.S. Communist Party unanimously elected her member of the Central Committee of the Party.

---

<sup>1</sup> Angela Davis, *An Autobiography*, Toronto, etc., 1975, p. 60.





Henry Winston  
applies to join the Communist Party



The nine Scottsboro Boys.  
A frame-up case



Winston speaking at a rally,  
12 February 1942



On active service during  
World War II



With his family after his army service. 1946

Communist leaders leaving Foley Square Court during  
Smith Act trial: William Z. Foster, Benjamin Davis, Eugene  
Dennis, Henry Winston, John Williamson and Jack Stachel





A Free Henry Winston picketline by White House. 1961



Winston after his  
release from prison.  
1961

William Z. Foster's  
burial in Red Square,  
Moscow. 1961

With his mother  
and wife







Watts, a "blazing ghetto" in Los Angeles, reduced to shambles by police brutality in the 1964 riots



Student youth protest U.S. aggression in Vietnam



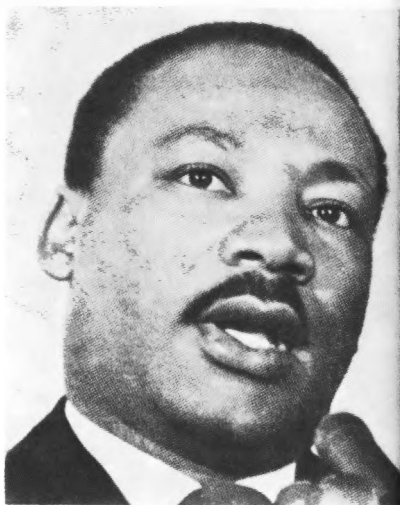
Puerto Rican picketlines defy President Johnson. "Will not kill our Vietnam brothers"

The "hot" summer of 1968. A Black demonstration dispersed in Washington, D.C.





Martin Luther King

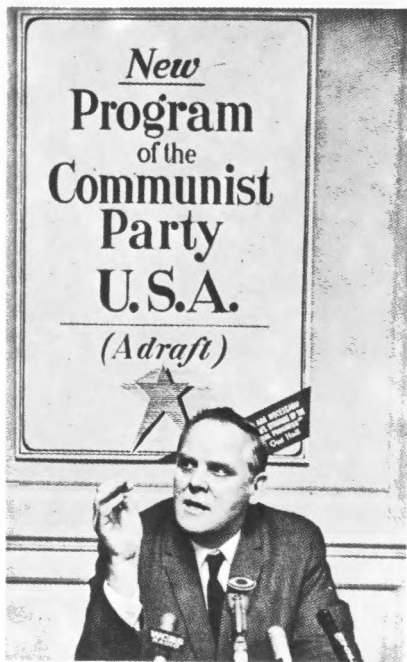


Fires in Washington in 1968. Anti-racist protest was quashed by police and the National Guard





Black Panthers arrested in Los Angeles



Gus Hall announces the draft of a new Party Program at a press conference in 1969



Angela Y. Davis

Henry Winston, Communist Party National Chairman, at the 1969 May Day demonstration in New York's Union Square



The C.P. U.S.A. delegation at the 24th C.P.S.U. Congress  
lays a wreath at the Lenin Mausoleum in Moscow. 1972





Henry Winston and Fidel Castro. Havana, January 1979

## PARTY CARD NUMBER ONE

The mass campaign to save Angela Davis, the upsurge of the working class struggle and the Black liberation movement helped raise the prestige of the Communist Party and its leaders. Winston and Hall were often invited to universities, colleges and television studios. They toured the country, delivered speeches and held conferences of Party activists from Chicago to Los Angeles and San Francisco.

By the early 1970s the Communist Party had made certain progress in expanding its ties with the masses. It was active in organizing large-scale action against the U.S. aggression in Vietnam.

In 1972, another election year, the Communist Party, using the experience it had gained in the 1968 elections, decided to again take part in the Presidential election campaign as an independent political force. The 1968 campaign had shown that many voters had been interested in the Communist Party platform and its assessment of the domestic and international political situation.

The 20th Convention of the Party was held in February 1972, and discussed the Party's participation in the 1972 election campaign. Henry Winston delivered the keynote speech in which he offered a profound and comprehensive ana-



lysis of the domestic political situation. He noted the danger of increased activity on the right. Attention should be focused, Winston said, on setting up a coalition of the working class, the Black population and all democratic and antimonopoly forces, in which the Communist Party should become an important element. Therefore, "the main content of the work of the Party as a whole for the year 1972 is the election campaign".<sup>1</sup>

Henry Winston pointed out that the election campaign was to become the task not only of the Central Committee but also of each and every state, county and section committee, that an opportunity was arising for establishing contact and relations with organized and unorganized masses of working people. "The election campaign is the alpha and omega of the work of the Party in 1972," Henry Winston emphasized.<sup>2</sup>

He proposed a broad program of Party action, aimed at rallying all the democratic and anti-monopoly forces. The Party nominated Gus Hall, its General Secretary, for President and Jarvis Tyner, National Chairman of the Young Workers Liberation League, for Vice-President. The Party decided to secure the inclusion of its candidates in the ballots of 20 states and the District of Columbia, instead of only two states (Minnesota and Washington), the way it had been in 1968.

During the election campaign, millions of people saw Gus Hall on television and heard his statement. The Party conducted a successful

---

<sup>1</sup> Henry Winston, *The Politics of People's Action. The Communist Party in the '72 Elections*, New York, 1972, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

campaign to collect signatures for the petitions demanding the inclusion of Communist candidates in the election ballots. The Party's election committee and its chairman Henry Winston did much to make this success possible. The committee drew up plans for rallies, lists of speakers and the tasks of each Party organization. Those who collected signatures for the petitions reported regularly to the committee.

In their attempts to undermine the Party's vigorous activity and force it to withdraw from the election campaign, the reactionaries resorted to all kinds of provocations. FBI agents infiltrated some Party activities, trying to sow discord and confusion. The enemies stopped at nothing, up to and including terrorist acts against Party leaders. In the summer of 1972 they plotted to assassinate Gus Hall at a St. Louis meeting where he was to deliver a pre-election speech. However, he was warned about the danger and the plot failed.

The Party continued collecting signatures. Its petitions demanding the inclusion of its candidates in election ballots were signed by 400,000 people in 25 states—much more than the number required by the states' laws. But, despite the successful campaign, the Party was allowed to take part in the elections only in 13 states and the District of Columbia.

A plenary meeting of the Party's Central Committee, held December 8 to 10, 1972, noted that the election campaign had helped the Communist Party to break through the boycott organized by the mass media and overcome the legal barriers preventing it from nominating its own candidates.

Besides, the reactionaries had failed in their attempts to present the Party as an illegal organization. Scores of millions of people were ready not only to listen to Communists but also to seriously assess their point of view. In the Party itself, confidence in its strength and influence grew.

In these circumstances, the December 1972 plenary meeting of the Central Committee decided to reintroduce Party membership cards. They had been abolished in 1948, when the House Un-American Activities Committee had been rampant and the Smith Act invoked against the Party.

The Communists welcomed the reintroduction of membership cards with great enthusiasm, and it was noted by the public at large. The *US News and World Report*, a reactionary periodical, featured an article entitled "Whatever Happened to ... U.S. Communists: Coming Alive Again?" which admitted that "the U.S. Communist Party—operating virtually underground for a quarter of a century—is again out in the open and claiming new strength. Membership cards are being issued for the first time since 1948... Communists are 'showing the face of the party'."<sup>1</sup> Membership cards began to be issued in January 1973, the first ones going to Henry Winston and Gus Hall. The introduction of membership cards helped strengthen the Party organizationally and attract new members, especially young workers.

---

<sup>1</sup> *U.S. News and World Report*, September 17, 1973, p. 66.

## THE CLASS STRUGGLE INTENSIFIES

The first half of the 1970s was marked by an upswing of the strike movement in the United States. The number of strikes grew from year to year. One of the reasons was the economic crisis: an unprecedented growth of unemployment, inflation and the downward slide in the living standards. Especially powerful were the strikes of railroad workers, teamsters, electrical workers, East Coast longshoremens, in the auto, steel and rubber industries, on international airlines, of agricultural laborers in the Californian vineyards, paramedical personnel in New York hospitals (for the first time in the nation's history their strike involved 30,000 people), *The New York Times* employees, teachers and others.

The Communist Party's influence in the working-class movement grew in the course of class struggle. But the Party could become a vanguard only in close contact with working masses. Lenin once particularly stressed that a Communist party should be able to "link up, maintain the closest contact, and—if you wish—merge, in certain measure, with the broadest masses of the working people—primarily with the prolet-

ariat, but also with the non-proletarian masses of working people."<sup>1</sup>

Amid the growth of the class struggle in the United States, different mass movements of social protest—the Black, women's and youth movement—were coming closer together. Scores of various groups and organizations sprang up, aiming to wage a joint struggle against the monopoly onslaught on the people's vital interests, against racial discrimination and political persecution.

The active involvement of the Communist Party in the establishment and work of mass organizations helped raise its prestige. It was especially noticeable among union members. New Party clubs began to appear in industrial centers; Communist organizations at industrial enterprises began to publish newsletters which gained certain influence.

The Party organized its practical activities in the labor movement in such a way as to help develop the workers' class awareness. Also organized was the National Coalition to Fight Unemployment and Inflation, established with Communist participation in 1973. It grew out of the successful struggle to free Angela Davis.

America had not seen such mass organization for years. Communists were directly involved in this action. They were especially active in the march on Washington of April 26, 1975. The column of Communist Party representatives marched from the Capitol to the Kennedy Stadium. Banners bearing the inscription "Communist

---

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 1966, pp. 24-25.

Party", slogans urging unity between white and Black Americans, a red flag—all that attracted attention, and Communist demonstrators were warmly greeted both by the rest of the marchers and thousands of onlookers.

From June 26 to 29, 1975, the 21st National Convention of the Communist Party was held in Chicago. Chicago was chosen as the host city for the first time in 50 years.

This time the convention was attended by some 400 delegates from 38 states or 31 Party districts (about 40 percent more than at the previous convention). Besides, four representatives of fraternal parties and 257 guests from Party and public organizations and labor unions were present. Women made up 40 percent of the delegates. Over 50 percent of the delegates were under 40, and over 250 had been Party members for one to ten years. Blacks accounted for 28 percent of the delegates, and representatives of other oppressed national minorities, for 10 percent.

The convention stressed that uniting all democratic movements in an antimonopoly coalition remained the Party's task. Unlike the 1950s or the early 1960s, the antimonopoly and antiwar sentiment, currently very widespread in the United States, facilitated the implementation of this important mission.

The convention again emphasized the urgent need to fight resolutely against racism, great-power chauvinism and antilabor demagoguery.

On June 29, the rally to mark the closing of the convention was held in the huge International Amphitheater which seated over 6,000. Over 2,000 people came there from other cities, not only Party members but also non-Communist workers

and young people, and several thousand from the city of Chicago.

Fascists and Klansmen threatened to wreck the rally. But the City Council adopted a resolution condemning the reactionaries but not the Communist Party rally. The police were ordered to prevent disturbances.

The rally began, and Gus Hall, Henry Winston and Angela Davis spoke. The event showed that the C.P., U.S.A. had many allies. After the Party became fully legitimate in 1974, many Americans who had been previously afraid to openly voice their approval of it no longer concealed it now.

The Communist Party decided to take part in the 1976 election campaign and again nominated Gus Hall and Jarvis Tyner.

This time petitions requesting that Communist candidates be entered on the election ballots collected over 500,000 signatures, compared to 400,000 in 1972. The Communist Party won the right to take part in the elections in 19 states and the District of Columbia, as against 13 states in 1972 and only 2 in 1968. The year 1976 saw a real breakthrough on national mass media.

The popularity of the Communist candidates grew during the election campaign which showed to the masses that the Party was in the front ranks of the struggle for the people's vital interests, for democratic rights, social progress and peace.

The 1980 election campaign was conducted amid abruptly intensifying activity on the right aimed to undermine detente. The Communist Party used the campaign to expose the danger inherent in the aggressive schemes of the more

reactionary U.S. imperialist quarters. In all his campaign speeches, Gus Hall, the Communist Presidential candidate, emphasized that the struggle against the threat of war and to defend peace was the crucial issue in today's world. This was recorded in all Party documents. Nowadays war threatened all mankind with destruction; wherever a nuclear war started, Gus Hall said, it would inevitably turn into a global nuclear war in which there would be neither winners, nor losers, no one can hope to have a safe-conduct or an asylum to find cover. If world peace was to be preserved and if mankind was to survive, detente and peaceful coexistence were the only option. Either coexistence, or non-existence. He added that a policy of peace would help solve domestic problems of the United States—unemployment, allocations for social purposes, etc.

The petitions requesting that the Communist candidates—Gus Hall and Angela Davis— be entered on the election ballots collected many more signatures than in 1976. Special emphasis was placed on collecting signatures of workers at large enterprises in the steel, auto and other leading industries.

In the course of the election campaign, Gus Hall was regularly interviewed by many local newspapers and radio stations. Occasionally, some big newspapers (for example, *The New York Times*) published items on the Communist election campaign. Mass rallies at which Gus Hall, Henry Winston and Angela Davis spoke were staged in several large cities—New York, Chicago, Detroit, San Francisco, Seattle and others. The New York rally gathered 5,000 people.



The elections ended in a Republican victory, and Ronald Reagan moved into the White House. His predecessor's reactionary domestic policies, which had increased inflation and unemployment, and aggressive foreign policy aimed at wrecking detente and preparing a nuclear war, explained the unprecedented defeat of the Democrats.

At the December 1980 plenary meeting of the Central Committee Gus Hall said: "In many ways our Party's 1980 election campaign was excellent. It was far better than any in the past. This, however, is not equally true for all states.

"We reached a much larger audience. During the petitioning we talked to over 5 million people while collecting signatures.

"We also packaged our ideas better, in clearer, more understandable and popular ways.

"In spite of serious financial drawbacks and mass media roadblocks, we were able to speak to tens of millions through TV, radio and the press."<sup>1</sup>

In those days, Henry Winston, together with Gus Hall and Angela Davis, spoke on the radio and was interviewed by the press.

---

<sup>1</sup> Gus Hall, 1981—*Mandate for Fightback*, New Outlook Publishers & Distributors Inc., New York, 1981, p. 11.

## WINSTON ON THE STRATEGY OF BLACK STRUGGLE AGAINST U.S. RACISM

Together with Gus Hall and other American Communists Henry Winston makes an important contribution to the theory of the national liberation, and working-class movements, and the organization of the Party.

Winston is especially concerned with the Black liberation struggle. The oppression of the Black people in the United States remains the most glaring injustice, and it is used to split the ranks of the working class. In his "New Data on the Laws Governing the Development of Capitalism in Agriculture", written in 1917, Lenin said that in the formerly slave-owning South of the United States vestiges of slavery were still strong. "Having 'freed' the Negroes, it (the American bourgeoisie—N.M.) took good care, under 'free', republican-democratic capitalism, to restore everything possible and do everything possible and impossible for the most shameless and despicable oppression of the Negroes."<sup>1</sup>

These words are still true today: the American bourgeoisie keeps up its oppression and exploitation of Blacks. However, it would be wrong to believe that nothing has changed in the situation

---

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "New Data on the Laws Governing the Development of Capitalism in Agriculture", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, 1974, pp. 24-25.

of the Black people in the United States in over 60 years. Their struggle for civil rights, waged over the past two decades, has brought certain positive results. Blacks have won some concessions from the ruling quarters. Congress has passed legislation on civil rights. Still, racial discrimination and segregation continue in many aspects of the nation's life. That is why Black Americans have continually expanded their struggle and made it better organized.

In the 1960s, the mass Black liberation movement became one of the crucial factors shaping domestic policies in the United States. The rise of the national liberation movement in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and the emergence of independent African countries exerted powerful influence on the mass psychology and political behavior of the Black population in the United States.

But the growing Black liberation struggle in America and other countries gave rise to an outburst of racism and chauvinism among the reactionary imperialist quarters and galvanized nationalist prejudice among the Blacks themselves. New social forces, lacking class struggle experience, joined the struggle. As a result, various anti-Marxist concepts permeated with nationalism and extremely harmful to the Black cause spread in the movement. They distracted Black masses from their main objective—the elimination of imperialist domination to gain social emancipation. Such reactionary concepts were put forward by Stokely Carmichael, James Forman, Huey Newton, Eldridge Cleaver, Roy Innis, Imamu Baraka, James Boggs, and others. At first glance, their theories differed from one

another: some were right-wing opportunist (like Newton's and Innis' ideas of giving up the struggle and aiming at "Black capitalism"), others were left extremist, calling for violence and terrorism. What made them similar was the separatist view of the Black liberation in the United States and Africa as an exclusively racial non-white movement. The separatists identified all whites, including the white working class, with the ruling quarters and their racist policies, and denied the existence of class distinctions in capitalist society.

The Communist Party, the only political party in the U.S.A. which consistently and resolutely fights for full equality for the Black and all racially oppressed people, exposes these false assertions and demonstrates who needs and profits by separatism.

Henry Winston set himself the task of exposing the subversive nature of such anti-Marxist concepts and the great harm they did to the Black liberation struggle in the United States and Africa, and of pointing the way to victory and freedom. That was the subject of his works *Negro-White Unity, Strategy for a Black Agenda. A Critique of New Theories of Liberation in the United States and Africa, Black Americans and the Middle East Conflict, Fight Racism—For Unity and Progress*, and *Class, Race and Black Liberation*.

The most important work, in which Winston offers a comprehensive examination of the problems Black Americans are facing, is his *Strategy for a Black Agenda. A Critique of New Theories of Liberation in the United States and Africa*. The book contains a profound critical analysis of unscientific, anti-Marxist theories on the

ways to solve the problems plaguing Black Americans. It is a book written by an internationalist, a Marxist-Leninist convinced that only joint action can make all nations truly free. "Beginning with the October revolution, only those guided by Marxism-Leninism have been able to free themselves from class and national oppression and take the road of socialist construction"<sup>1</sup>—this idea is central not only to this but also to all other books by Henry Winston.

On the basis of comprehensive analysis of the Black liberation movement and the working-class struggle in the United States Winston shows that separatism, the isolation of Blacks from whites—which Innis, Baraka, Carmichael and other Black nationalists advocate—serves reactionary and imperialist interests and undermines the unity of the revolutionary forces. Oppression, including racial oppression, can only be eliminated when mankind throws off the chains of imperialism. Freedom can be won only in the course of the class struggle of all workers, irrespective of the color of their skin. "The first requisite for bringing about an anti-monopoly liberation strategy," Winston writes, "is building joint action—the unity of Black and white labor. No force in our country could match the power and strategic position of a united working class—white, Black, Brown, Red, Yellow."<sup>2</sup>

The main enemy of all nations, he continues, is world imperialism with its base in the United

---

<sup>1</sup> Henry Winston, *Strategy for a Black Agenda. A Critique of New Theories of Liberation in the United States and Africa*, International Publishers, New York, 1973, p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

States. But the imperialists, their allies and collaborators also come in many colors. They have their strongholds in Tokyo, Pretoria and many other capitals. *"The oppressors themselves are never divided by color. They compete and make war against each other with the lives of the people—for the 'right' to dominate and exploit. Among themselves, U.S., British, French, Italian, German, Japanese, Belgian, Dutch and South African imperialists are color-blind. They are likewise color-blind when it comes to bribing and manipulating the people's betrayers in Asia, Africa and the Americas."*<sup>1</sup>

Winston stresses that the ideas which reduce unity among fighters for liberation merely to the color of skin are in fact a "suicidal skin strategy". Separatists—like Carmichael, George Padmore, Innis and others—in the final analysis slide into anti-communism and anti-Sovietism.

Henry Winston severely criticizes the concept advanced by Roy Innis, leader of the Congress of Racial Equality, who calls on Blacks to invest in Africa (this would inevitably assist in the neocolonialist enslavement of the developing countries) and develop "Black capitalism" in the United States—that is, to set up small businesses financed, managed and staffed by Blacks. "Black capitalism," Winston observes, "would at best mean token aid for a few at the expense of the great majority of Blacks."<sup>2</sup>

This would not solve the problem: monopoly capital would continue to exploit the Black minority. The Pan-Africanist James Forman has

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 18-19.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

gone especially far by advancing the strategy of seizure of state power in the United States by the Black minority. He asserts that the power of those in control is not greater than that of Black people, and calls for urban guerrilla warfare.

These concepts are clearly provocative. The anti-imperialist struggle of the working people is bound to fail if there is no unity between Black and white workers. The Black liberation movement must merge with the class struggle waged by the working class as a whole.

Winston's *Strategy for a Black Agenda* is very important both for the United States and for Africa. Gus Hall has noted that it is a "historic contribution to the struggle against reaction". The C.P. U.S.A. Central Committee stressed that the "book reflects the Party's views on the entire range of the subjects under discussion... It is not only an outstanding example for each in personal terms but also a great contribution by our Party and its leaders, by our working class to the Black liberation movement. The book offers us many opportunities we must not miss."

## TURNING 70

The Soviet people know and deeply respect Henry Winston, a staunch revolutionary and Marxist scholar, a sincere friend of the U.S.S.R. and other socialist countries, and a dedicated champion of friendship between the Soviet and the American people, of peace throughout the world.

On February 4, 1977 the Learned Council of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences Institute of U.S. and Canadian Studies conferred a doctorate *honoris causa* on Henry Winston. *Pravda* wrote in this connection: "Henry Winston, a prominent figure in the international Communist movement, has been awarded this degree for his outstanding contribution to the national liberation struggle theory, for his profound scholarly analysis of practical revolutionary struggle by the working people of the United States for a democratic and social transformation of society, against imperialism and racial discrimination."<sup>1</sup>

Henry Winston was in Moscow during the 26th Congress of the C.P.S.U. as a member of the C.P. U.S.A. delegation.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, February 5, 1977.



Upon his return to the United States he declared: "I am proud that I have witnessed a historic congress. The Soviet Communists have advanced a program of further raising the people's well-being and a comprehensive platform of struggle for peace, detente and disarmament. Only this road of concrete and constructive negotiations and accords to curb the arms race can save mankind from the threat of nuclear catastrophe. This is in glaring contradiction to the policies of the current Republican administration. The latter not only dooms millions of Americans to poverty and unemployment but also pushes the world to the brink of catastrophe accelerating war preparations and fomenting anti-Soviet hysteria. Common sense demands acceptance of the Soviet proposals. Today, we American Communists view efforts to publicize and explain the new Soviet peace initiatives to our people as one of our foremost tasks."

On April 2, 1981 Henry Winston turned 70 years old. The Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. sent him the following message to mark the occasion:

"Dear Comrade Henry Winston,

"The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union sends you warm fraternal greetings and heartfelt congratulations on your 70th birthday.

"You are well-known as a prominent leader of the U.S. Communist Party who has devoted all the long years of his socio-political activities to a courageous struggle for the interests of the working class and all the working people of his country, against racism and reaction, for genuine equality, democracy and social progress. Your unwavering loyalty to the ideals of Marxism-

Leninism and proletarian internationalism has gained you prestige with the world Communist movement. The Soviet people value highly your tireless efforts in the name of peace, disarmament, understanding and peaceful cooperation between the peoples of the United States and the Soviet Union.

"We wish you, dear Comrade Winston, good health and success in your work for your people, peace and progress."

The Presidium of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet awarded Henry Winston an International Friendship Order in recognition of his contribution to the struggle for peace, social progress and the cause of understanding and cooperation between the American and the Soviet people, and in honor of his 70th birthday. Earlier, in 1976, he had received the Order of the October Revolution.

Henry Winston received messages of congratulations from other Communist parties, progressive organizations and individuals. Among them was a message from Fidel Castro:

"On your 70th birthday, we wish to extend greetings from our Party and reiterate the admiration our people feel for a life dedicated to the Communist cause.

"We Cuban Communists heard in your voice the message of solidarity from the most just people in North America at the Second Congress of our Party. We wish you new success in your indefatigable struggle for social justice and peace."

And another message:

"On the occasion of your 70th birthday, please accept the Portuguese Communists' most sincere wishes of good health, fruitful work and personal happiness, as well as our tribute to a lifetime

wholly dedicated to the cause of liberation of the working people.

Alvaro Cunhal,  
General Secretary,  
Communist Party of Portugal."

The government of the German Democratic Republic conferred a Karl Marx Order on Henry Winston.

On May 9 several hundred people gathered in the conference hall of the Cenral Committee building to pay tribute to Henry Winston on his 70th birthday. These people were not only New Yorkers: Communists and non-Party members arrived from other cities to take part in the celebration.

Gus Hall mounted the rostrum. An old friend of Henry's, he had written in an article to mark Winston's 60th birthday: "The bonds that unite us are something more than political ties. We are brothers and regard each other with particular warmth, typical of soldiers fighting for a common and just cause. In this sense we happen to represent the common destiny which unites white and Black workers in a close brotherhood of class, in a union for national liberation and working-class struggle. They are involved together in a single worldwide revolutionary process which embraces all nations and all races and which is aimed at freedom and prosperity for all mankind."

Now, ten years later, Gus Hall congratulated Winston on his 70th birthday and again hailed him as an outstanding leader of the American Communist Party, working-class and Black liberation movements, as a relentless, single-minded revolutionary.

Winston's friends and comrades-in-arms took turns to pay tribute to him: James Jackson and Charlene Mitchell, members of the Central Committee Political Bureau, Gil Green, member of the Central Committee who, together with Winston, had stayed underground longest, James Steele, Chairman of the Young Workers Liberation League, and Henry's wife Fern.

Sid Taylor, member of the Central Committee Political Bureau, climbed the podium carrying a huge red Party membership card. He opened the symbolic document and read the inscription: "In honor of your 70th birthday, dear Winnie!" "I am happy to present this gift on behalf of the Political Bureau and the Central Committee of the Communist Party," he said, handing the card to Winston. He added that 70 new applicants for Party membership wrote that they were joining in honor of Henry Winston's 70th birthday.<sup>1</sup>

Born in the midst of the oppressed Black people, Henry Winston rose to the post of National Chairman in a Communist Party which works within the stronghold of imperialism. A man who lost his eyesight through the inhuman treatment by his jailers; a man who makes reports at conventions and inspiring speeches at rallies and tours numerous countries; a political leader working enthusiastically—such is Henry Winston today.

---

<sup>1</sup> The *Daily World*, May 13, 1981, p. 2.

### REQUEST TO READERS

Progress Publishers would be glad to have your opinion of this book, its translation and design and any suggestions you may have for future publications.

Please send all your comments to 17, Zubovsky Boulevard, Moscow, USSR.

*Printed in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*

"The life of Comrade Henry Winston is a proud page in the history of our Party. It is an illuminating page in the history of our working class, in the history of Black Americans fighting against racial and national oppression. It is a page of leadership, of courage, of dedication. It is commitment to the full measure."

Gus Hall,  
General Secretary, C.P. U.S.A.

"The spirit that animates Henry Winston infuses the courageous and beautiful people who are fighting imperialism. It is the spirit of people who know deep down within themselves which side they are on, and who know, too, that their side—our side—is invincible."

John Abt



Imported by

**IMPORTED**

**PUBLICATIONS, INC.**

320 West Ohio Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60610  
Phone 312/787-9017



**Progress  
Publishers  
Moscow**